A Manual of the Dhamma

Dhamma Dīpanī



Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

Aggamahāpaṇḍita, D.Litt.

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Editor's Foreword

As the translator says, the purification of the Saṅgha is now an urgent matter, as the neglect of the Vinaya rules is commonplace. Also, as the Sayādaw says, "If a monk, who is well-trained in the Vinaya, accumulates many followers and great material wealth, he can do much damage to the Buddha dispensation, unlike an ignorant monk." So books like this are vital.

In the absence of the Buddha, maintaining acceptable standards of conduct for monks is hard, even if there is wide agreement on what acceptable standards are. The monks most in need of restraint are those least amenable to advice. At the first Buddhist Council, even five hundred Arahants could not agree on which offences were lesser and minor (Vin. ii. 288). The Milindapañha says that offences of wrong doing *(dukkaṭa)* and wrong speech *(dubhāsita)* are lesser and minor offences. This is reasonable since offences requiring confession *(pācittiya),* or confession with forfeiture *(nissaggiyā pācittiya)* include: killing animals, drinking intoxicants, telling deliberate lies, abusing monks, hitting monks, eating in the afternoon, and using money. All these things are contrary to the precepts observed by lay people or novices. So we cannot regard them as minor, except in comparison to the major offences such as sexual misconduct, stealing, or killing human beings. We could regard telling jokes, making sarcastic remarks, or talking with the mouth full while eating as minor offences, but scrupulous monks will observe even these minor rules out of respect for the Buddha.

Books like this are vital. Due to lack of knowledge, unwise lay people will slander monks, shameless monks will abuse scrupulous monks, scrupulous monks will have ill-will towards shameless monks, and many may fall into hell.

As the Sayādaw points out, there are skilful ways to criticise the wrong conduct of shameless monks without making unwholesome kamma. Wise lay people can make merit by donating allowable requisites and paying respect to shameless monks. If asked for unallowable things, they can politely ask, "Is this allowable?" to remind a shameless monk of his remissness without criticising him directly. There are so many rules to observe, that even the most scrupulous monk is likely to overlook some offences. A lay person can give money to a lay attendant, inviting a monk to ask for whatever he needs. If a lay person gives money or other unallowable things to a monk, he or she will make only demerit.[1]

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[1] "*Yampi so Tathāgataṃ vā Tathāgatasāvakaṃ vā akappiyena āsādeti, iminā pañcamena ṭhānena bahuṃ apuññaṃ pasavati* — Also, whoever offers to the Tathāgata or to the Tathāgata's disciple what is not allowable, in this fifth case makes much demerit." (Jīvaka Sutta, M. i. 369). The word "*āsādeti*" means "invite to accept" or "offer", so a lay person makes demerit even if a scrupulous monk refuses to accept money. Any honest person will be insulted if offered a bribe. To offer money to a monk is also an insult.

An attendant is living in dependence on the monk, so he should obey the monk's instructions, but a lay person does not have to.

Regarding one's own conduct one should not tolerate the slightest fault, but regarding others' conduct one should cultivate boundless compassion and tolerance, or practise detachment. When associating with fools, which means all those who do not observe basic morality, one should guard one's mind and speech very carefully, otherwise one will be sure to make unwholesome kamma. Diamonds, rubies, and emeralds are extremely valuable due to their great rarity. If one is unable to find such precious jewels, one must make do with quartz or marble for ornaments — and even sandstone can be used for grinding knives!

These are very special rare times that we live in. The Buddha's dispensation is extremely precious, but it is decaying year by year. All Buddhists should strive to maintain the true Dhamma, but they need sufficient knowledge and wisdom to discriminate between true Dhamma and corrupt Dhamma. From corrupt Vinaya comes corrupt Dhamma; from corrupt Dhamma comes corrupt Vinaya. Therefore, they should read books such as this carefully, and reflect deeply on their own moral and mental purity. They should practise tranquillity and insight meditation to gain control of the passions. If lay Buddhists have a mature knowledge of Dhamma and Vinaya, it can only help to prolong the Buddha's dispensation. With great compassion they should urge and encourage the monks to promote the essential practices of scriptural study or insight meditation, instead of giving them money or asking them to practise astrology.

The translator's preference was to leave technical terms untranslated, but in my experience most readers find Pāḷi words a barrier to understanding. If one insists on one different English word for each Pāḷi term, being consistent is very difficult. The key terms here are few, but their meaning varies according to context. Three very similar Pāḷi terms — *susīla, lajjī,* and *sīlavanta* — could all be translated as "moral" or "virtuous." To show that "*lajjī*" has the opposite meaning to "*alajjī*" — shameless, I have used the translation "scrupulous," but in some contexts "moral" or "virtuous" is more appropriate. In the Vinaya, "*dussīlo* — immoral" has the specific meaning of defeated, no longer a monk due to commission of the gravest offence, so one should not use it loosely.

As the Vinaya rules only relate to verbal and physical misdeeds, a scrupulous monk could lack virtue or goodness. It depends on his intention for observing the Vinaya rule. If it is only for the sake of praise and gain, it will not amount to much. However, if he reveres the Buddha and follows the rule out of respect for the Buddha's command, then he rightly deserves to be called a virtuous monk, not just "scrupulous." He certainly should not be called "fussy" or "difficult" just

because he is not weak-willed and shameless. A virtuous monk may break rules sometimes due to unmindfulness or strong defilements, but when he realises his offence, or if his fellow monks remind him of it, he readily admits his fault and duly makes amends according to the Vinaya procedure prescribed.

A shameless monk, on the other hand, may be wise in the sense of being learned in Abhidhamma, Sutta, and Vinaya, but he lacks any genuine virtue. He frequently breaks the rules knowingly and deliberately, without any moral scruples or sense of shame. Though he knows his offences clearly, he does not admit that there is any fault in breaking the Buddha's injunctions. If his fellow monks point out his offences, he either retorts by accusing them of other offences, evades the issue, or follows the rule only while others are looking. Such completely shameless monks lack virtue and moral integrity. They are not just weak or heedless, but truly wicked.

Many modern monks, due to lack of proper training, do not clearly know what is an offence, and what is not. They just follow what their preceptors, teachers, and fellow monks do. Such monks are shameless as well as foolish, though they may sometimes be good-natured. Having become a bhikkhu, one should understand the training that one has undertaken. If one reads just the basic Pāṭimokkha rule, one will soon realise if one's teacher or preceptor is shameless. A newly ordained monk is not in a position to correct a shameless preceptor or teacher. He will either have to disrobe and seek re-ordination elsewhere, or ask to study with a famous teacher or meditation master. If he is negligent, he will inevitably become shameless like his teacher.

What the Sayādaw says here applies to lay people too. Lay Buddhists can also be classified as moral or immoral, wise or foolish, good or bad. The texts contain plenty of guidelines for lay Buddhists to become moral, wise, and good devotees. As monks have a duty to study and train in the monastic discipline, lay Buddhists have a duty to study and train in the lay person's discipline. Detailed guidance can be found in the Siṅgāla, Maṅgala, and Sāleyyaka Suttas. They should also undertake regular courses in insight meditation, since insight is indispensable to moral purity. If both lay Buddhists and monks strive hard to study and practise the Dhamma and Vinaya, the Buddha's dispensation will be preserved in its pristine purity. All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good people to do nothing.

Translator's Preface

The Dhamma Dīpanī, written in Burmese by the late Venerable Ledi Sayādaw, a famous scholar and meditation master, is, I think, the best of his many expositions *(Dīpanī)*. This work concerns the Vinaya. The survival of the Buddha's Dispensation depends on the survival of the Vinaya. The Sayādaw answered thirteen questions asked by devoted lay persons in 1901. All lay supporters want to see virtuous monks guiding the people and serving the dispensation effectively, for the Saṅgha is the mainstay of the Buddha's teachings. To prolong the Buddha's dispensation, all well-wishers want to purify the Saṅgha by suppressing immoral monks. Nowadays, the purification of the Saṅgha is an urgent matter, as neglect of the Vinaya rules is commonplace.

Moreover, the monks who scrupulously observe the Vinaya are the best ones to guide the laity in the attainment of the highest merit. It is hardly surprising that lay disciples do not want sham monks to prosper and wield influence among ignorant lay Buddhists. Thus the regulations of the Saṅgha, especially the guidelines for lay-monk relationships, are of universal interest. All Buddhists should ponder the questions and answers in this book. Because they are subtle, they should contemplate them very deeply.

Since these problems are of practical and fundamental importance for both the laity and Saṅgha, an expositor must possess genuine insight and a comprehensive knowledge of Vinaya. Fortunately, the Sayādaw fulfilled these qualifications. All his expositions display not only his academic mastery, but also his practical inclination. Though knowledge is important, mere learning leads us nowhere. His well-reasoned answers, with relevant quotations from the texts, reveal his many-faceted ability.

In the affairs of monastic discipline, partial knowledge and facile solutions will only harm the Buddha's dispensation, in which the Saṅgha plays the central role. It is due to monks who respect the Vinaya that the true Dhamma and the correct way to salvation still exist. Some think that the Vinaya is unimportant, maintaining that many rules should now be amended. Such people lack the correct understanding of the authority of the Buddha in prescribing the discipline. They fail to appreciate the profound nature of the Buddha's command and its sanctity. If they study the five books of Vinaya and their commentaries in detail, a strong faith in the Vinaya will emerge. Confidence is fundamental for monks, and wide-ranging knowledge is essential for scholars.

The readers will find profound thoughts in each answer expressed by the Venerable Sayādaw. Though profound, the explanations are clear. The Sayādaw explains the classification of all types of monks, past and present. The reader will gain much useful information and wise guidance from this book as it deals with the laity's difficulties too. Ignorance of the Vinaya among the laity hastens the decline in the moral standards of the monks. Intelligent lay people should promote good standards by skilful actions as explained herein.

Because of the great significance of the thirteen questions, the Primate of the Shwegyin sect, the most Venerable Mahāvisuddhārāma Sayādaw of Mandalay, asked Venerable Ledi Sayādaw to answer them. After examining the Vinaya texts, commentaries, and subcommentaries, the Venerable Sayādaw gave comprehensive answers correctly and wisely, for he had analysed the problems in great depth. Those who adopt unskilful attitudes towards scrupulous monks *(lajjī)*, shameless monks *(alajjī)*, and immoral monks *(dussīlo)* will adjust their views after carefully reading this exposition.

The great merit of this book consists in its sound advice, caution, and warning. Moreover, skilful ways to deal with all types of monks are given for the benefit of the laity. The most important point lies, I think, in the well-defined classification of monks, along with the factors and characteristics required to evaluate a monk in question. The profundity and sacredness of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha are also clearly explained for ordinary lay people. Monks, too, will gain new insights if they appreciate the intrinsic power of Vinaya, which displays the supreme authority of the Buddha himself. Then their behaviour and outlook will improve.

As the book deals with Vinaya matters, some technical terms are difficult to translate. To avoid misunderstanding, I have purposely retained some original Pāḷi terms and Vinaya categories. After repeated study I hope these basic terms will become familiar and meaningful, like the Pāḷi words *kusala, akusala,* Dhamma, Saṅgha, or kamma, which are now in common usage. They have gained wide currency in many countries and retain their original meanings without any need for explanation.

I have tried to follow the original Burmese text closely so that the author's profound answers, warnings, remarks, and guidelines will remain faithful in the translation. In a technical book like this some inaccuracies of translation can occur for which I crave the indulgence of the reader. Polishing is an endless job, but one has to stop somewhere. I have tried to make the work both readable and accurate. The ordinary reader can consult other translations of the Vinaya texts, but scholars may wish to study further. For them the Vinaya commentaries will be helpful.

I have to thank James Ross for his urgent and repeated request to translate this most important work of the international scholar-monk. The staff of the library department of the Religious Affairs Directorate at Kabā-Aye, Rangoon, gave me vital assistance in checking references and quotations. I owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

I am sure that the dispensation will continue to shine in many countries with the spread of the original Vinaya texts and explanatory books like this. Buddhism has attracted many students and scholars everywhere. Scientists especially are researching Buddhism as it conforms with scientific principles and methods. A deep sense of joy arising from sublime, noble conduct will result if they develop morality, concentration, and wisdom.

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On July 1901 seven laymen from Okkan village put thirteen questions, to which I will give answers. They are devoted laymen, namely, Taka Circle Headman Maung Po O, Rest House Donor Maung Shwe La, Pagoda Builder U Baw, Monastery Donor Saya Saing, Monastery Donor Maung Htut, Pagoda Spire Donor Maung Shwe Ye, and Supporter Maung Nge. They, and some villagers, asked these thirteen questions regarding the problems of monkhood and its relationship with the laity. I will now give a concise answer to each question.

The Thirteen Questions

1. Nowadays in the Buddha's dispensation there are three different types of monks, namely: *lajjī* (one with a moral conscience, a scrupulous monk), *alajjī* (one with no moral conscience, a shameless monk), and *dussīlo* (without ethical conduct, a bad, fallen, immoral monk). So we wish to know the factors or characteristics embracing each type as mentioned in the Pāḷi texts, commentaries, and subcommentaries. Kindly give the factors to classify each type.

2. Should those who know the truth about shameless and immoral monks refrain from associating with and paying respect to them? Does this agree with the verse in the Maṅgala Sutta that advises one to avoid the foolish *(asevanā ca bālānaṃ)?* Is a lay person who shows disregard by shunning bad monks following the injunction of the Maṅgala Dhamma? We would like to know of scriptural evidence and examples regarding the good or bad results from this action.

3. Should those who know the truth about shameless and immoral monks continue to pay respect and offer requisites? Are they following the Maṅgala Dhamma that advises us to associate with the wise *(paṇḍitānañca sevanā)?* Is this behaviour following the advice given in the Maṅgala Sutta or not? Kindly give evidence and case histories regarding good or bad results from this act.

4. If a person offers the four requisites such as almsfood, knowing a monk to be shameless or immoral, does this amount to the Maṅgala Dhamma that says one should honour the worthy *(pūjā ca pūjaneyyānaṃ),* or is this contrary to that advice? Kindly let us know the good or bad results with appropriate case histories and evidence.

5. If a person pays respect and shows deference by greeting, bowing, etc., knowing a monk to be shameless or immoral, does he fulfil the Maṅgala Dhamma that says that one should pay respect to the worthy or honourable ones (*gāravo*)? Does his behaviour agree with the text that says one should pay respect only to those who possess good conduct? The text referred to is in the Kosala Saṃyutta. By worshipping bad monks does one accomplish a reliable refuge? Kindly give evidence or examples to show the right way in this matter of honouring bad monks.

6. If one speaks ill of a monk or condemns him, either directly or indirectly, knowing him to be shameless or immoral, does one attract ten evil punishments or not? Is one free from evil with this act?

7. If a shameless monk becomes afraid of suffering in saṃsāra, or if he acquires moral dread, how can he become a scrupulous monk? Is it possible for him to become a scrupulous monk?

8. Should lay persons learn the Vinaya? Does this kind of learning agree with the Maṅgala Dhamma that advises one to be well-trained in discipline (*vinayo ca susikkhito*)? What are the good or bad results of this act? Kindly give evidence or examples to prove a definite point.

9. Should a monk teach the monastic discipline to a lay person? What are the good or bad results of this? Please give some evidence.

10. Kindly give the detailed factors or characteristics of each of the four purifying moralities (*pārisuddhi sīla*). You may give each its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause.

11. Among the four purifying moralities, what are the bad effects if a monk transgresses basic monastic restraint (*Pāṭimokkha saṃvara sīla*). What are the good effects if a monk observes it? Kindly explain the remaining three types of purifying morality, which may have good or bad effects according to observance or non-observance.

12. What are the factors of offerings made to the whole Saṅgha (*saṅghikadāna*)? How can we perform this type of donation?

13. Of the two types of donation, offerings to the Saṅgha and offerings to the Enlightened One, which has greater merit?

The Three Types of Monks Defined

The lay people asked this question in the following sense: different kinds of Buddhist monks can now be found: scrupulous monks *(lajjī),* who possess moral conscience; shameless monks *(alajjī),* who possess no moral conscience, and immoral monks *(dussīlo),* who are depraved and evil. They want to know the essential characteristics of each type for classification according to the Pāḷi texts, commentaries, and subcommentaries.

The three types of monks have been mentioned in the Parivāra Pāḷi (Vinaya Piṭaka) as follows:

> *"Sañcicca āpattiṃ nānāpajjati, āpattiṃ naparigūhati.*
> *Agatigamanañca nagacchati, ediso vuccati lajjī puggalo."*

The meaning is this: "They are aware of the Vinaya rules and, with no thought of transgression, refrain from breaking them. If they transgress some rules due to human weakness, they never conceal their offences. Moreover they do not follow the four wrong courses *(agati)*.[1] Such monks are called scrupulous individuals *(lajjī puggala)* — monks with moral conscience." [From now on they will be called scrupulous monks, ed.] These are the three factors or characteristics of a scrupulous monk. The clarification is as follows:

1. When a scrupulous monk knows that any action is a transgression of the Vinaya rules, he refrains from it.
2. However, he might sometimes break some Vinaya rules knowingly or unknowingly due to his untamed mind. He never hides the facts and always purifies his morality according to the rules within a day.
3. When he has to distribute property or decide cases, he avoids the four wrong courses, i.e. he always acts or decides justly and impartially.

A monk having these three factors or characteristics is called scrupulous. This is the meaning of the text quoted above.

The three factors or characteristics of a shameless monk are stated in the Parivāra as follows:

> *"Sañcicca āpattiṃ āpajjati, āpattiṃ parigūhati.*
> *Agatigamanañca gacchati, ediso vuccati alajjī puggalo."*

[1] Following a wrong course through desire *(chandāgati),* aversion *(dosāgati),* ignorance *(mohāgati),* or fear *(bhayāgati).*

This text says that a shameless monk is one who, with the knowledge of the Vinaya rules, transgresses them and commits evil. Having committed evil, he then conceals his actions. Moreover, he follows the four wrong courses. Such a monk is called shameless.

The meaning is as follows:

1. A shameless monk, knowing that any action is contrary to the Vinaya rule, breaks the precepts wilfully.
2. Whether by his awareness of Vinaya or by his transgression through ignorance, he conceals his faults, though he knows he has broken the Vinaya rule. That is, he does not attempt to purify his faults in the way prescribed.
3. When distributing property among monks, or in deciding cases, he follows the four wrong courses.

If even one of these factors is present, such a monk is shameless.

Here, a detailed explanation is necessary. The Vinaya Commentary says: "One who is shameless from the start does not exist." So shamelessness is impermanent. In other words no such individual as a permanently shameless monk exists. The commentary says that at the time of ordination a monk cannot be classified as shameless, but he may become shameless according to his mental attitude at any given moment. No monks are permanently scrupulous or shameless based on social class, religion, nationality, etc. A monk may become shameless ten times, or scrupulous ten times within a few minutes. It is possible that within a single sitting a monk may become shameless or scrupulous ten times alternately.

How is this possible? Several Vinaya rules can be broken repeatedly within a short time, so a monk may be classified as shameless more than ten times. Even within a short period, thousands of precepts may have to be observed, which some monks do no know about. Due to his wrong attitude or carelessness, a monk may break them very often. So for that duration he must be classified as shameless. On the other hand if he becomes ashamed whenever he transgresses the rules, realises his fault, confesses it, and determines not to repeat it, he becomes a scrupulous monk again.

Clearly, scrupulous and shameless categories cannot be associated with race, religion, or culture, nor can any monk be permanently classified as scrupulous or shameless. Nevertheless, if a monk does not follow the principles of the monastic discipline throughout his life he should definitely be classified as a shameless monk.

The Vinaya Commentary says that a shameless monk remains shameless only when shamelessness appears in him, and when he possesses one of three factors without confession and purification. As soon as he does these things, he immediately regains the status of a scrupulous monk. In the Sāratthadīpanī subcommentary the following important explanation is found:

> *"Ādito paṭṭhāya hi alajjī nāma natthīti iminā diṭṭhadiṭṭhesuyeva āsaṅkhā na kātabbāti dasseti."*

"Herein: 'One who is shameless from the start does not exist' means that one must not cast doubt or suspicion on a monk whenever one sees him, thinking that he is shameless. This attitude should not be taken." This is the advice of the subcommentary.

Only when one sees a monk doing an immoral deed, can one classify him as shameless at that time and place, and at no other. Moreover, one can doubt this monk's behaviour then only, and so entertain suspicion. If one does not really see a monk's act of immorality, no suspicion should be entertained. This is the meaning of the Pāḷi text, commentary, and subcommentary.

Four Kinds of Transgression

The phrase "*sañcicca āpattiṃ āpajjati*" means intentional transgression of the Vinaya rules (that is, with knowledge of the discipline). In detail, four classifications cover all types of offence:

1. Transgression with knowledge of the rule.
2. Transgression without knowledge of the rule.
3. Transgression with knowledge of the object (things or matter to be transgressed).
4. Transgression without knowledge of the object (things or matter to be transgressed).

The explanation is as follows: In the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Buddha prohibited monks from eating ten types of meat.[1] If a monk breaks this Vinaya rule, he commits an offence. He breaks this prohibition proclaimed by the Buddha for all monks. If a monk knows this Vinaya rule, he achieves the status of one who knows discipline. If he does not know this Vinaya rule, he is classified as one who is ignorant of the Buddha's prohibition. Both concern the rule in the sphere of

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[1] Human (*manussa*), elephant (*hatthi*), horse (*assa*), dog (*sunakha*), snake (*ahi*), lion (*sīha*), tiger (*byagghaṃ*), panther (*dīpiṃ*), bear (*acchaṃ*), and hyena (*taracchaṃ*).

"knowing" or "not knowing." When a monk fails to understand whether any particular meat is allowable, the case is concerned with the object (*vatthu*). Then he has knowledge or ignorance of the object.

Likewise, regarding the acceptance of gold, silver, and money, a monk may or may not know the rule concerned. Thus, he may be knowledgeable or ignorant regarding the Vinaya. Similarly, regarding the object that should be shunned, classification calls for two cases: knowledge of object and ignorance of the object.

In Vinaya the technical term '*āpatti*' means fault, offence, committing, and transgressing. Herein, two classes of offence can be found: an offence according to the world, and an offence against the Vinaya rule.

The first type of fault includes killing sentient beings, stealing, and so on. These misdeeds are regarded as unwholesome everywhere so this transgression is known as a fault according to worldly ethical principles.

Regarding the second type of offence, it relates to the breaking of Vinaya rules such as not digging the ground, cutting trees and grass, etc. Such offences, though not evil in the moral sphere of the everyday world, are offences against the Vinaya. The rules for monks taught by the Buddha belong to the faults according to the Vinaya rules for ordained monks.

A detailed examination is necessary for each of these two types.

A monk who has transgressed the worldly prohibition with knowledge and volition becomes a shameless monk. If he breaks a moral principle without knowing it, sometimes he falls into an offence against the Vinaya rule as he knows the object of his transgression. Then he becomes shameless too. Examples of these shameless offences are killing, taking liquor, drugs, etc. He is guilty on both counts, a worldly offence and a Vinaya offence.

However, breaking some training rules occasionally does not amount to a Vinaya offence. Since a monk is free from any offence mentioned in the Vinaya, he cannot be classified as shameless.

Most training rules (*sekhiya*) and prohibitions in the Mahāvagga and Cūḷavagga Vinaya texts are not offences if one is unaware of them, even if one transgresses the rule. If one knows the rule, but one is ignorant concerning the object, it is an offence against some rules, but not all. In breaking a rule while ignorant of the object, though an offence is sometimes committed, a monk is not thereby shameless. An example of this is a monk drinking liquor. If a monk does not know that he has taken liquor, thinking it to be medicine, it is an offence. However, he cannot be called shameless even though he commits an offence. If a monk kills a sentient being not knowing it has life, he destroys life unintentionally. In this case he does not transgress the Vinaya rule, and he is not shameless either.

A monk becomes shameless only when knowledge of the rule and knowledge of the object are both present. In breaking the rule with knowledge of the rule, but ignorant of the object, he is not shameless. Likewise, a monk remains scrupulous if knowledge of the object is present, but he is unaware of the rule. He does not become a shameless monk. If he knows neither the rule nor the object, and commits an offence, he cannot be called shameless.

The above explanation is given to clarify the meaning of "intentional transgression of the Vinaya rules," and to show the characteristics of a shameless monk.

The second factor is *"āpattiṃ parigūhati,"* which means that when transgressing the Vinaya rules a shameless monk conceals his fault. Concealing is characterised by ten factors as follows:

1. Transgression of the Vinaya rule or prohibition.
2. Knowledge of transgression or guilt.
3. Presence of a well-wisher (a monk) nearby.
4. Presence of a companion monk among them.
5. Absence of any danger.
6. Awareness that there is no danger.
7. Physical possibility exists to cure or purify the offences by confession and following the procedures laid down for that offence.
8. Awareness that physical competence in making confession exists.
9. Presence of an attitude to cover up the fault until after dawn.
10. Hiding the fault until after the next dawn.

If the above ten factors are present until the following morning, a new offence of wrong-doing *(dukkaṭa)* is committed, adding to the previous offence. Moreover, a monk thereby becomes shameless. However, if one of the ten factors is lacking, a monk should not be called shameless.

Note that if a monk has all the necessary factors to confess his offence, but fails to do so, he becomes shameless until the confession is made. So a monk may remain shameless for one day, one month, one year, ten years, etc., unless he confesses the offence and follows the prescribed procedure voluntarily. This is a significant point.

The second factor, which says "he knows he has transgressed the rules," applies to those who do not know the Vinaya rules. Among untrained, ignorant monks, many will not be aware of their faults even if they break the rules. A few

monks may not be aware of transgressions at all, while the majority may not know the rules in detail. The reason is a lack of training in Vinaya. Transgressions without awareness are not offences for such monks. So no charges of shamelessness should be made against them.

This is the explanation of the term "*āpattiṃ parigūhati.*"

For the third factor the text mentions four features: he does not take a wrong course through desire, ill-will, delusion, or fear.

These four wrong courses must be considered, especially in the matter of the distribution of communal property and alms *(saṅghika)*. Scrupulous monks should be free from these four faults as explained in the commentarial literature. However, one should note that partiality, prejudice, bribery, and corruption relate to offences only. The Vinaya teachers say that these four faults arise only when one first breaks a rule, then follows a wrong course due to bias.

However, the arising of this guilt is very subtle. In cases requiring a decision of guilty or not guilty, both sides try hard to win the case, quoting Vinaya, Sutta, and Abhidhamma. However, it often happens that one side, though knowing the correctness of the other, does not admit it and continues to argue to establish the fault of the opposite party. This unfortunate behaviour arises due to pride, conceit, and attachment. One side, lacking humility, claims its views to be according to Dhamma, though this is unwarranted. Similarly, the other side, due to pride, argues that an offence is no offence. Some proclaim no offence to be an offence. By doing so, each side commits the evil of false speech, or lying. This is the offence of taking a wrong course. This fault often arises when one quotes Vinaya, Sutta, and Abhidhamma for one's own ends in dispute, disregarding the truth. So false speech is classified as a wrong course. This explanation concerns the phrase "*agatigamanañca gacchati*" — taking a wrong course, the third factor mentioned above.

When it comes to classifying as scrupulous or shameless, those who lack knowledge of the Vinaya keep only a few precepts. So these monks have little chance of becoming shameless.

Those who are well-versed in the Vinaya, attain eminence or conscientiousness in morality. However, if non-observance prevails among monks well-educated in the Vinaya, the likelihood of becoming shameless is great. If a monk, who is well-trained in the Vinaya, accumulates many followers and great material wealth, he can do much damage to the Buddha dispensation, unlike an ignorant monk. This well-educated monk is like an armed robber or thief who enters a treasure-house and steals its contents.

Here ends the section on the characteristics of scrupulous and shameless monks in brief.

Characteristics of an Immoral Monk

The technical term "immoral *(dussīlo)*" means a totally depraved monk who commits an offence of defeat *(pārājika)*. The *duṭṭhadosa sikkhāpada* states "If a monk, being angry, and wanting to make another monk disrobe, falsely accuses him of defeat, he commits an offence requiring a formal meeting of the Saṅgha." He commits a serious evil by his accusations against an immoral monk who has committed an offence of defeat. If a monk, without the aim of expelling an immoral monk, merely accuses or belittles him so that his honour and power will be extinguished, he commits an offence requiring confession *(pācittiya āpatti)*. Even if he abuses or speaks ill of an immoral monk, he transgresses the *pācittiya* rule.

Accusation with Charges of Defeat

Words spoken against an immoral monk with the following charges mean "speaking ill or accusation."

"You have committed an offence of defeat."

"You possess no moral conduct."

"You are not a monk at all."

"You are not a son of the Sakyan clan."

Such expressions used against a monk are charges of defeat as mentioned in the commentary.

The term "shameless" *(alajjī)* includes an immoral monk who has fallen into an offence of defeat. However, the text says that a shameless one transgresses minor offences *(dukkaṭa)*. So the term "shameless" covers both great and small offences. Therefore if a monk speaks ill of someone only as "shameless" he escapes the serious offence of Saṅghādisesa. As the Vinaya texts and commentaries give precise examples, only those monks who have committed an offence of defeat should be classified as "immoral."

Those monks who do not commit any offence of defeat, but who occasionally break other precepts are not immoral monks, though they are shameless if the requisite factors are present. Apart from offences of defeat, other offences do not confer immoral status, so "shameless" and "immoral" monks are clearly quite different. The way to distinguish them has been explained already.

In the Vinaya Commentary the term "*dummaṅkū* — wicked" is used in the phrase "*Dummaṅkūnaṃ puggalānaṃ niggahāya* — for the restraint of wicked men." So a shameless monk can also be called "wicked." Among shameless monks two distinct types can be defined: immoral and shameless *(dussīla alajjī)* and ordinary shameless monks *(samanya alajjī)*.

In the matter of offences of defeat one must classify a monk as immoral and shameless. In cases dealing with other offences only the ordinary shameless *(samanya alajjī)* classification appears, which is called "wicked." For a defeated monk is definitely an immoral monk, not just a shameless one.

The term "wicked" has been explained in two ways in the Vimati Ṭīkā, a Vinaya subcommentary. It says that after committing an offence of defeat a monk becomes a totally bad one — that is completely without moral conduct. If a monk breaks only the other rules, partially he is good. Total depravity cannot be assigned to him. He is immoral only to some extent. So he is partially moral and partially immoral. Even those monks who commit light offences of wrong-doing or wrong speech, fall into the category of immoral *(dussīla)*.

It is clear, according to this subcommentary, that a monk can more easily become immoral than shameless. So this explanation is unreasonable. This explanation is contrary to the teaching of the great commentaries and famous subcommentaries, which unanimously declare that an immoral monk lacks morality — "*dussīlassāti nissīlassa dussīlo'ti*" (commentary on '*nissīlo*'). All the great Vinaya commentaries agree in commenting on the words "*asamaṇo asakya-puttiyo*" from the Duṭṭhadosa Saṅghādisesa precept that an immoral monk lacks all morality. So the Vimati Ṭīkā's words are against the spirit of the great commentaries and subcommentaries. It is not surprising that competent Vinaya masters reject this exposition of the Vimati Ṭīkā.

The term "*dussīla puggala* — an immoral individual," means one who has transgressed a *Pārājika* rule and so lacks all disciplinary virtues — a defeated monk. As long as this defeated monk does not admit his offence and still associates with genuine monks, accepting food and other alms, he is automatically classified as immoral. If he confesses his fault, he immediately escapes from the category of immoral, and also from a monk's status.

Legal Status of Immoral Monks

An immoral monk, at the time of his confession, becomes free from the stigma of "immoral" by renouncing his monkhood. However, an immoral monk may refuse to admit his guilt, and continue to live as a monk. Is he still a monk? Is this immoral person still a monk before the time of admission of guilt? The answer is that he retains the appearance of monkhood, but with the stigma of immorality. He is still a monk, though in appearance only.

The answer is correct. Evidence can be found in the Vinaya Piṭaka. In the Saṅghādisesa rules an immoral monk may claim that he is still a monk, although he has committed an offence of defeat. If he does not confess his fault he is still

in possession of "*paṭiññā,*" that is, he retains the idea "I am a monk." If a monk accuses him of defeat, without seeing, hearing, or suspecting anything, he is just as guilty as if accusing a scrupulous monk, and falls into a Saṅghādisesa offence. If a monk makes such accusations regarding an immoral novice, he falls into an offence of wrong doing. This is the first proof of the correctness of the answer.

If a monk dwells under the same roof for more than three nights with a layman or a novice, he is guilty of an offence of *pācittiya.* However, if he lives in the same dwelling with a fallen monk there is no offence, so it as if he were a genuine monk. The reason is that the outward sign of monkhood is still present in the immoral monk. This is the second proof for the correctness of the answer.

If a monk abuses a layman or novice, it is an offence of wrong-doing. If a monk abuses a fallen monk, who has not confessed his guilt, the abuser falls into an offence of *pācittiya.* In this case abusing a fallen monk is equivalent to abusing a genuine monk. This is further proof of the effect of an immoral monk claiming a monk's status.

Neither a layman nor a novice fulfils the requirements for conveying one's purity to the Saṅgha *(chanda-parisuddhi)*,[1] but a fallen monk does because the outward appearance of monkhood is present. This is yet another proof.

So it is clear that although he not a true monk, an outward sign *(liṅga)*, or idea *(paṭiññā)* exists because of the power of Vinaya.

Although an immoral, fallen monk has committed one of the gravest faults, if he still claims that he is a monk, his status is just like a true monk. How is this possible? This monk receives the power and command of the Buddha's Vinaya when, at the time of his ordination, he asks for and receives the robes from his preceptor. This itself is a Vinaya power of the Buddha. Secondly, he has gone through the five Vinaya procedures, such as declaration by the Saṅgha *(ñatti)* following rules laid down by the Buddha. So, despite breaking the gravest rule, he retains the outward appearance of monkhood due to the two features he received from the Vinaya procedure, and they retain their power until his voluntary confession.

This is surprising, but correct. Once a layman asks for and receives robes from his preceptors according to the Vinaya rules, he immediately transcends the lower status of a layman. Upon taking the three refuges and accepting the robes in the way prescribed by the Vinaya, he immediately becomes a novice. This is due to the power of the Buddha's command. Just asking for and receiving robes elevates him to a higher status than a layman, even if he fails to receive the

[1] If a monk is too sick to attend the Uposatha ceremony he must send his declaration of purity and consent to the Saṅgha through another monk. (ed.)

three refuges for lack of a suitable preceptor. If he remains in this position, he is more honourable than a layman because by this one procedure he attains the features and status of one gone forth.

For bhikkhu ordination, four *kammavācā* recitations[1] are mandatory to achieve the full status of a bhikkhu. Yet even a single *kammavācā* recitation is sufficient to raise the candidate to the status of a novice. He now achieves, under the power of the Vinaya procedure and ceremony, the status of one gone forth. As the *kammavācā* recitations are completed up to the fourth round, his gone-forth status is repeatedly established. If the preceptors, for unavoidable reasons, stop their ordination procedure at the third recitation, this person is much higher in status than a novice although he lacks full bhikkhu ordination. He now receives the features or honours of a homeless life praised by the Buddha. If the fourth *kammavācā* recitation is completed, it raises him up to the full status of one gone forth, as a full bhikkhu in the Saṅgha.

If a novice breaks one of the ten training rules for novices, he destroys both the maintenance of three refuges and his status of a novice. However, while retaining the robes, he cannot be classified as a layman. He remains in the position of a novice. Once he discards the robes, he is deemed to be a layman.

An offence of defeat committed by a monk destroys him as a genuine monk, but he does not fall into the category of a novice or a layman yet. His monk status remains if he retains the appearance of this status. Once he renounces the appearance then he must be classified as a layman. All traces of monkhood now disappear, even the outward sign of wearing the robe.

An analogy is given here. If a scrupulous monk renounces his Vinaya obligations before the Saṅgha in the proper way, he becomes a layman again. Similarly, a fallen monk renounces his monk status by discarding his robes, thereby becoming a layman in the full sense. Due to the power of the Buddha's command, this fallen monk maintains his monk status if he retains the outward appearances of a monk. However, he is an immoral, fallen monk due to his serious fault. When he confesses his offences and renounces his outward appearance, he becomes a layman. As a layman, he now escapes from the charge of being an immoral, depraved monk. The main point here is that if he does not discard his robes, even if he confesses his offence, we cannot classify him as a layman yet.

According to the Vinaya, if a monk abuses a fallen monk without just cause, it is just like abusing a scrupulous monk. The resulting offence is the same as abusing a scrupulous monk, and the accuser commits a serious *(saṅghādisesa)*

[1] One motion, followed by three announcements.

offence. By understanding this subtle point, it is clear that slandering a fallen monk is worse than slandering a scrupulous layman. This is because the accused still claims to be a monk. Retaining the outward sign of a monk keeps him under the power of *kammavācā;* thus he is still under the power of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha too. It is not because of his serious misdeeds, but because of the power of his ordination *kammavācā,* which is under the sublime influence of the Triple Gem. His acceptance of this declaration and his retention of the robe give him these powerful refuges. He retains a certain status.

However, these powerful refuges cannot save him from serious evil kamma, and the resultant suffering. By his commission of an offence of defeat, and his disgraceful claim to be a monk, he gathers evil kamma day by day. In other words, his evil kamma increases if he remains in these sacred shelters. Moreover, those who abuse an immoral monk accumulate serious evil effects themselves, due to this awkward situation. Those who appreciate the power of Vinaya show respect to an immoral, fallen monk, getting great merit. These three effects must be noted carefully.

Should One Avoid Shameless and Immoral Monks?

Questions two and three will be answered together as they are related. Let us recapitulate the two questions:

> "Should those who know the truth about shameless and immoral monks refrain from associating with and paying respect to them? Does this agree with the verse in the Maṅgala Sutta that advises one to avoid the foolish? Is a lay person who shows disregard by shunning immoral and shameless monks following the Maṅgala Dhamma? We would like to hear evidence and case histories from the scriptures regarding good or bad results from this act."

> "Should those who know the truth about shameless and immoral monks continue to pay respect and offer requisites? Are they following the Maṅgala Dhamma that advises us to associate with the wise? Is this behaviour following the advice given in the Maṅgala Sutta or not? Kindly give evidence and case histories regarding good or bad results from this act."

To answer these questions one should understand the nature and characteristics of shameless and immoral monks. The famous Maṅgala Sutta emphasises the nature of foolish or wise persons. In the injunction calling for associating

only with the wise, the nature of good and bad persons is stressed. Here the Buddha taught the nature of the pious and the impious. In this subtle matter one must make distinctions to know the respective basis of each type.

1. Moral *(susīla)* and immoral *(dussīla)*.
2. Foolish *(bāla)* and wise *(paṇḍita)*.
3. A good man *(sappurisa)* and a bad man *(asappurisa)*.

Thus there are three pairs of persons with respect to their nature and characteristics.

In the Sarabaṅga Jātaka *(Cattalisa Nipāta)* the Buddha distinguishes three types. Sakka, the king of the gods, asks in detail regarding the nature of each personal characteristic as follows:

1. Who is called moral *(sīlavantaṃ)* by the wise?
2. Who is called wise *(paññavantaṃ)* by the wise?
3. Who is called good *(sappurisaṃ)* by the wise?
4. Who will never lose honour and respect?

These were the bodhisatta's answers to Sakka's questions:

1. Those who control their senses, avoiding any kind of physical, verbal, or mental evil, who refrain from lying even at the risk of their life, are called moral persons by the wise.
2. Those who, possessing profound wisdom, can answer philosophical questions with their innate wisdom, having no selfish regard for themselves or others, who refrain from abusive words and coarse actions that harm oneself and others, but work for the welfare of humanity, are called wise by the wise.
3. Those who are grateful, have a steady mind, possess the attributes of a good friend, respect the worthy, and diligently fulfil the duties of a friend, are called good by the wise.
4. Those who possess morality, wisdom, and piety, gain confidence, show humility, share their possessions unselfishly with others, understand the words of the alms seeker, help others according to just principles, practice truthfulness and show civility, will never lose honour and respect.

We can summarise the above classifications on the basis of avoidance of immoral deeds or offences. These persons are moral persons as they possess the characteristics of a moral person.

Regarding the nature and characteristics of a wise person, we must consider three factors:

1. The ability to answer deep questions effectively and directly.
2. Avoidance of physical and vocal misconduct, especially harsh words that harm the welfare of oneself and others.
3. Whenever the opportunity arises one can work for the welfare of oneself and others.

Regarding the nature and characteristics of a good person, we must consider four factors:

1. The ability to know and acknowledge the gratitude due to others.
2. Possession of the qualifications of a good friend.
3. Ability to associate with the wise.
4. Willingness to help the poor and the needy, with the necessary skill to perform appropriate duties energetically.

Regarding the nature and characteristics of a pious and honourable person we must note the above factors, with the addition of confidence and humility.

Then Sakka asked again, "Which is the best among morality, honour, goodness, and wisdom?"

The bodhisatta answered: "The sages declare that just as the moon is the brightest among the stars, among morality, honour, goodness, and wisdom, wisdom is the chief and best of all, because all good conduct, honour, and good character must follow its lead." In other words all must follow the lead of a wise man.

In the text are other questions and answers regarding how to gain wisdom, etc., but we omit them here as they are not relevant.

Among the four good factors mentioned above, the first three are the main points to remember in our discussion of types of monks. Among the first three, we may further distinguish those who lack morality as shameless or immoral, as explained earlier. One lacking goodness can easily accumulate the characteristics of a shameless and immoral person too. Due to lack of wisdom one will take on the nature and characteristics of a fool. Lack of piety and respect will make one a bad person, taking on the nature and requisite factors of a bad man. Thus there are three pairs:

1. Moral (*susīla*) and immoral (*dussīla*).[1]
2. Wise (*paṇḍita*) and foolish (*bāla*).
3. Good (*sappurisa*) and bad (*asappurisa*).

Each has its own distinctive nature and characteristics in a different category.

Among the six types in three opposite pairs, one may associate with a moral person, a virtuous type, shown in the first category in the first position. Those having friendship in paying respect to a moral person can usually become moral too. Respecting or honouring an immoral or bad person can make one immoral or bad. Those who show respect and honour to the wise can usually become wise too. Friendship with a bad person makes one bad. However, if one makes friends with a pious, good person one usually becomes good. Obviously, the best person to associate with and respect is one who possesses all three virtues: morality, wisdom, and goodness.

If a person honours and respects a moral, foolish, bad person he gradually becomes likewise. However, the presence of morality is good, so we must praise him for this aspect while we should condemn foolishness and badness.

Who is a moral, but foolish and bad monk? Some monks try their best to keep their precepts and follow the monks' training. As they are ordinary persons, they sometimes break some disciplinary rules, falling into offences, but they purify these offences as soon as possible. They are therefore classified as moral monks. However, since they fail to study Dhamma and Abhidhamma, they are ignorant, so they are classified as foolish. Also, if they do not acknowledge the benefit received from others, they are bad monks in the technical sense. So they are coarse and uncultured persons.

I will now explain in detail the nature of a bad person. This feature manifests as ingratitude. He is blind to the benefits received from others, and refuses to pay honour and respect to the worthy. He breaks the rules of good friendship by changing his attitude if someone criticises him. Moreover, a bad person fails to seek knowledge and wisdom, or to make friendship with the wise. If he sees friends in need, he acts as if not seeing them, thus he does not acknowledge their former friendship. So if one of the *asappurisa* factors exists, he is classified as "bad" because of this characteristic. He is not a good monk. This explains the nature of the moral, but foolish, and bad monk.

With the shameless and bad, but wise monk, those who pay respect and help him, obtain similar characteristics themselves. So we must praise a devotee who

[1] In this context, 'immoral' also means 'shameless' as it is opposed to 'moral.' *Cf.* the bodhisatta's definition of moral (*sīlavantaṃ*) above (ed.)

becomes wise as his teacher is also wise. However, as the shameless and bad aspects are present, we must blame both the devotee and the monk. Herein, the term "wise" only means well-educated in Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma. So we call a monk "wise" though he lacks the other two good qualities. However, since he breaks the Vinaya rules very often and does not care to restrain his senses, we also classify him as shameless. As he fails to acknowledge the benefit he receives from others and has other characteristics of a bad person, we call him "bad." Indeed, he is not a good monk in these aspects. The above factors show the characteristics of a shameless and bad, but wise monk.

Following this method of classifying monks, many monks of mixed triple types can be found for further examination. One can see that most monks, like most lay persons, are of mixed triple types — a compound of good and bad features. This type is common everywhere. To befriend, honour, and support the moral, wise, and good monk is best, if possible. These are the best persons in the world, bringing the greatest benefits and welfare for all. They are worthy of respect and honour in all essential aspects.

If however, a devotee fails to find this ideal type, he needs to cultivate foresight and culture in choosing and helping a particular monk for worship, honour, and almsgiving. He needs intuitive skill in dealing with monks with mixed good and bad qualities.

The Simile of the Good House

A man needs to build a house in the forest, and enters the forest in search of timber. If he can get all beams, posts, floorboards, planks, and shingles from a single tree, this is the best, and ideal. If he is unable to find such a tree, he should not fail to build his house. He must use whatever timber he can get from various trees that he finds. He must build his house anyhow by all means because not having a dwelling place leads to all kinds of trouble and hardship. Every man needs a home for rest, sleep, and comfort. So a wise seeker of building materials must carefully examine each tree he happens to find in the forest. If he finds long logs he must take them for posts. If he finds straight timber that is too short for posts he must take it for planks or shingles. He must ignore unsuitable materials or sizes in each tree that he finds. By selecting only useful logs of appropriate sizes, leaving behind the useless ones, he can build a good, strong house for his benefit with the wood from various trees. By wise discrimination a well-built house results.

By choosing suitable materials for each purpose from various trees, one obtains a beautiful, strong house. He is no different to a person who finds all the suitable material from a single excellent tree. His house is not inferior in any way,

because he obtains and dwells in a well-built house made from good materials. His house lasts long enough for his descendants too.

The above simile is a practical illustration for a comfortable life. Following this wise method, a devotee should pay attention to the good features of a moral, but foolish, and bad monk. He should pay respect to the good points in a person, ignoring the lack of the factors required for good and wise status. He should honour the moral features in such a person, thus gaining a clear conscience and much benefit. He should not utter harsh or slanderous words against this monk for his other faults, weaknesses, and failures. They must be totally ignored. One should not lump together all good and bad features of a monk in one's mind.

If he blames and abuses this monk by lumping together all features, he becomes a foolish and bad person himself. He suffers for his disrespect and for his harsh words. Moreover, he fails to get the benefit of honouring and respecting the aspect of morality in this monk, due to his own foolishness. The wise course for an intelligent, devoted person is to rely on a wise monk for wisdom and to associate with a good monk for his humility and gentleness. One should therefore take heed of these different causes and different effects, being ever vigilant when approaching a monk for almsgiving, and showing respect.

One who helps a moral, but foolish and bad monk, may contradict the Maṅgala Dhamma calling for avoidance of fools because of the foolish aspect. By association with a foolish monk, this may appear to be so. The Maṅgala Sutta enjoins all to avoid foolish persons. Because of the words "to associate with the wise", one might think this contradicts the advice to follow the wise. However, such a devotee, because of his wise attitude and appropriate choice, does not break these two good rules mentioned in the Maṅgala Sutta and Jātaka. In fact he obtains the blessing of association with the wise for his clear thinking and suitable deeds.

What benefits does one gain by respecting a monk of the type shown above? The reason for getting benefits is that in the ultimate sense the essence of a wise person is moral conduct. This is explained in the Abhidhamma (Mātikā) in relation to a pair of terms "*bālā dhamma*" and "*paṇḍita dhamma.*" So morality alone, in the ultimate sense, is wisdom. If a person pays attention to the characteristic of morality alone, he gets at least part of the blessing called "associating with the wise." If, however, he pays attention to a monk's foolishness and badness, he cannot attain this blessing as his mind mixes all sorts of factors, good and bad. Because of this, he becomes foolish and bad too.

Regarding the remaining monks of three mixed qualities, one can probably understand the appropriate results, because all are similar to the above example.

Some monks may lack all three good factors, being known as shameless, foolish, and bad. No one should pay respect to such a monk or honour him, as he does not possess a single redeeming virtue. Therefore one should just ignore this type of monk and refrain from speaking abusive words. If one relies on or honours this type of monk one is breaking the injunction of the Maṅgala Sutta, which enjoins one not to associate with fools.

In each case one should make a detailed analysis and appropriate classification, since many combinations of vice and virtue can be found. The questioners asked about the classification of shameless and immoral, with the resultant types of foolish, wise, and bad persons. So in this answer I have given a detailed analysis and necessary comments for clarity's sake.

If one understands the method of classification of monks in the first answer, one will have clear answers for the second and third questions. The essential points are the same.

A note of warning. All devotees and lay persons should maintain an intelligent attitude. A narrow-minded, egoistic devotee will, at first, pay respect to a moral monk, but as familiarity grows, all kinds of attachment and clinging arise, thus diminishing the monk's status. Intimacy, attachment, and familiarity lead to ignoble deeds that are improper according to the Vinaya. So corruption and decline set in due to intimacy. An unwise lay person can destroy a monk due to intimacy, wrong attitudes, and ulterior motives.

What is the meaning of Maṅgala Dhamma? How does one get it? In the ultimate sense, attitudes and acts that promote wholesome factors or merits are Maṅgala Dhammas. One gets blessings based on one's meritorious deeds. Conversely, demeritorious attitudes and deeds are misfortunes since they increase unwholesome states. One should understand that both are impersonal states in their ultimate sense and characteristics. Regarding the problem whether one should associate with this or that monk, in the ultimate sense personal factors are absent. The essence of correct behaviour is to associate with wholesome states and not to associate with unwholesome states. This is the crux of the problem and the infallible guide to appropriate action.

Sevitabbāsevitabba Sutta

In the Sevitabbāsevitabba Sutta (the discourse on associating or avoiding) the Buddha declares in the clearest terms:

"Sāriputta, if by associating with a person you develop unwholesome states, lessening or destroying wholesome states, you should avoid that person.

Sāriputta, if by associating with a person you develop wholesome states, lessening or destroying unwholesome states, you should associate with that person."

The essential point is to choose between wholesome states and unwholesome states objectively.

The Bālapaṇḍita Sutta

A fool is so called because he habitually thinks bad thoughts, speaks bad speech, and does bad deeds. A wise person is so called because he habitually thinks good thoughts, speaks good speech, and does good deeds. So those who are evil in thought, speech, and deeds are depraved or wicked. Those who are virtuous in thought, speech, and deeds are wise and cultured.

Nowadays many lay persons and monks fail to attain complete purity in all three spheres of morality. Some are moral in their bodily actions, but immoral in speech and thought. Others, though moral in speaking the truth, are immoral in their actions and thoughts. Many have good intentions, but cannot speak or behave skilfully. Some are skilful in two spheres, but lack purity in the third. Thus, all kinds of people can be found with mixed physical, verbal, and mental skills.

Most people possess a mix of good and evil in each of the three spheres. In choosing a teacher or a monk for one's mentor, one should check to see if wholesome states are developing or deteriorating. In other words, all intelligent persons should examine their own moral progress in honouring or associating with others.

The questioners have asked about the good or bad results of associating with or supporting shameless and immoral monks. They want evidence or case histories for the respective effects, good or bad.

It is said, "One shameless monk creates a hundred shameless ones by association and example." So the bad results of associating with shameless monks are too great to measure.

The Buddha warns us that those who associate intimately with the shameless will take on their characteristics. This is the first bad result. Subsequent bad results are as follows. If one becomes shameless in this life, one is liable to retain this characteristic in thousands of future existences, as one is far removed from moral conduct. Once one becomes bad, one will tend to be bad in a series of future existences too. If one becomes foolish, being without knowledge and insight in this life, one becomes a fool in countless future lives. These are the bad results.

Seeing only bad results and the gravity of each case, one should avoid associating with shameless, bad, and foolish monks. Moreover, these persons, lacking morality, goodness, and wisdom, cannot bring blessings to those who

meet them. Association with them usually brings only misfortune. Those who want to obtain blessings in associating with them should first reform their own minds and attitudes. Devotees and donors should concentrate only on some virtue or good aspect of such monks. Great care is needed here.

As for the evidence of good or bad effects, one should study the commentary on the Suttanipāta that explains the phrase "*Āsevanā ca bālānaṃ*" in detail. More examples to prove this point can be gleaned from teachers and learned preceptors. Dhamma teachers will give sermons on this matter, relating stories from the Tipiṭaka and its commentaries.

Should One Honour Shameless and Immoral Monks?

> "If a person, knowing a monk to be shameless or immoral, offers the four requisites, does this amount to the blessing that says that one should honour worthy persons? Or does it contradict this advice? Kindly let us know the good or bad results with suitable evidence and case histories."

First one should know the persons worthy of honour as mentioned in the Suttanipāta Commentary. They are 1) the Omniscient Buddha, 2) a Pacceka Buddha, 3) a Noble Disciple, 4) one's mother, 5) one's father, 6) one's elder brother, 7) one's elder sister, 8) the mother of one's husband, 9) the father of one's husband, 10) the elder brother of one's husband, 11) the elder sister of one's husband.

This commentary mentions only eleven types who are worthy of honour and respect. The commentary on the Dakkhiṇavibhaṅga Sutta further mentions that, for householders who take refuge in the Three Gems, novices, monks, and Noble Ones are worthy of honour and respect. In classifying persons who are worthy of honour we should therefore include the following: 12) an ordinary householder who accepts the three refuges, 13) an ordinary householder who maintains the five precepts, 14) an ordinary novice, 15) an ordinary monk. Thus, fifteen types of worthy persons can be found.

For ordinary novices and monks we can define three further classes: scrupulous (*lajjī*), shameless (*alajjī*), and immoral (*dussīlo*).

Offering almsfood and other requisites to scrupulous novices and monks amounts to the good practice enjoined in the Maṅgala Sutta as "honouring those worthy of honour." One may doubt whether offerings to shameless or immoral novices and monks fulfil the Maṅgala Dhamma or not. The answer is that offerings to shameless novices and monks do amount to honouring those worthy of honour. The only problem to consider is whether we can classify offerings to

immoral novices and monks as an auspicious deed. Many lay supporters find themselves in perplexity here. So I should give the answer in detail for clarification and guidance.

In the Visuddhimagga it says that every monk, once ordained, bears the burden of more than nine billion[1] Vinaya rules. In the five Vinaya books explaining the *Pāṭimokkha saṃvara sīla,* the Omniscient Buddha proclaimed innumerable rules for all monks. So every monk in this dispensation undertakes innumerable precepts and training rules, which he must learn and follow. Once the three refuges and *kammavācā* recitations have been completed, every monk has accepted the innumerable rules of basic monastic restraint *(Pāṭimokkha saṃvāra sīla)*.

The Omniscient Buddha's power of making Vinaya rules and regulations for all monks is based on "*Ānādesanā*" — his authority or command. So once a layman receives the robes from his preceptor, he automatically transcends a layman's status and instantly becomes a homeless one. Even at the initial stage of ordination, a candidate is worthy to receive homage and alms from lay donors. This is due to the status received from the mandatory law of the Vinaya. Lay people should show their respect by bowing, though the candidate has not yet undertaken the novice rules and regulations. At the third round of reciting the Three Refuges he automatically undertakes the novice rules and regulations. Then he is a real novice and needs no further taking of precepts as he has undertaken them automatically after the completion of the ordination procedure.

If this fully ordained novice breaks one of ten main rules,[2] he destroys the status of the Three Refuges, thereby forsaking all rules of one gone forth. What remains are the asking and taking of the robe, so he has not yet reverted to the status of a layman. He is still a novice according to the Vinaya. However, he is not a true novice of the type mentioned above as he lacks the training rules. If, however, he takes the Three Refuges from the Saṅgha again, he undertakes the training rules again. Only if he fails to take the Three Refuges from the Saṅgha can he be classified as immoral, since he falsely claims to be a novice. If he does not take the Three Refuges again, he is an immoral, fallen novice. If he admits his faults, he is not classified as immoral, and he becomes a layman by this act.

Many lay people think that if a novice breaks one of the ten main rules he automatically becomes a layman. This is wrong. If the act of taking up the robes

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[1] *Navakoṭisahassāni asītasatakoṭiyo, paññāsasatasahassāni chattiṃsā ca punāpare.* 9,180,150,036 if one *koṭi* is taken to be 10[illegible] (Vism.46). This huge number is arrived at by permutation — '*peyyālamukhena niddiṭṭhā.*'

[2] Not to be confused with the novice's ten precepts. (ed.)

is retained, he cannot be classified as a layman. The matter of disrobing for the transgression is not the responsibility of the preceptors or teachers. The decision rests with the novice concerned. What preceptors and teachers can do is to expel an immoral novice from the Buddha's dispensation. These explanations are in accordance with the Vinaya text[1] and decisions in the commentaries. This explains the nature of an immoral novice.

Besides the ten main disciplines, a novice has to observe ten punishments and seventy-five training rules, which are classified as "offences" or "punishments." So if a novice transgresses one in this class, no failure of the Three Refuges arises, there is no destruction of the precepts either. What fault he gets here is the breaking of restraint only. This type of offence can be cured by undergoing punishment, after which he regains his purity of restraint as before.

Innocent Until Proven Guilty

The principles of Vinaya are subtle. One must think deeply on them before one can pass judgement on a novice or monk.

Let us give an example. During the time of British rule in Burma, the government conferred administrative powers on Township Officers. These officers, after appointment, could try particular cases, pass judgement according to specific rules, and prescribe suitable punishments. If they committed some offences themselves, these officers must, according to government servant conduct rules, lose their offices, while other offences resulted in suspension of duties only. These latter offences could be cured by the payment of fines. The nature of each office, its powers, types of offences and appropriate punishments were published in the Civil Service Act. According to this Act, a Township Officer automatically assumed powers conferred by the Government at his appointment. Regulations that would lead to his dismissal from office only applied when he committed specific offences. When he was dismissed, all his powers disappeared. Some misdeeds, however, caused him to pay fines, but did not lead to his dismissal; so he retained his office and still tried the cases of others. The powers conferred when assuming office, remained intact, though he himself suffered fine-paying punishment for some wrongful acts. This example is to clarify the different types of offences committed by a novice or monk.

In the Vinaya rules two main categories can be seen.

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[1] "I allow you, monks, to expel a novice with [any of] ten faults. He kills living beings, steals, is unchaste, tells lies, drinks intoxicants, criticises the Buddha, Dhamma, or Saṅgha, holds a wrong view, or seduces a nun." (Vin. i. 85).

1. *Samādāna sīla* — One takes vows and makes a determination to observe the numerous precepts. This is called "undertaking morality." It includes the rules undertaken implicitly by performing the ordination ceremony.

2. *Saṃvara sīla* — The life of a novice or monk carries a moral duty of restraint. This is called "morality of restraint." The restraint of the senses from sensuality is a duty of voluntary moral endeavour.

Once a novice takes the three refuges in the proper way, he automatically fulfils "undertaking morality" with this formal act. However, "morality of restraint" needs the effort to observe a precept when a chance to break it occurs. For this type of morality, a novice must cultivate the confidence and will to practise the teaching. Then he must refrain from breaking a particular rule if a chance to break it occurs.

As mentioned already, there are two types of purification or punishment for a novice. If he breaks a rule deserving expulsion, he automatically forsakes the Three Refuges, and all precepts that he had undertaken are thereby given up. Not a single training rule remains intact. If he transgresses a rule that calls for punishment or purification, he retains the virtue of taking the Three Refuges, and he still observes the precepts. Even breaking of a precept in this case does not destroy his undertaking. He retains the novice's precepts and status. He has only broken and defiled his restraint, not his undertaking. So if he observes the prescribed punishment for purification, his purity of restraint is re-established.

In the case of a monk's precepts, he receives them all as soon as the fourth *kammavācā* recitation is completed in the ordination hall. He automatically undertakes the monks' precepts by following the ordination procedure. As for the purity of restraint, it is the same as for a novice. He must train himself in the morality of restraint.

If a monk breaks one of the four rules of defeat, all the precepts he has undertaken are automatically lost. Not a single precept or discipline remains with him. However, if he breaks any rules other than those of defeat, he has only broken and defiled his restraint of those particular rules — his undertaking of the bhikkhus' training remains intact. This is the power of the Vinaya.

Thus a clear distinction must be made between breaking his undertaking of the bhikkhus' training, and the breaking of his restraint. Only then can one clearly know whether a novice or a monk is shameless or immoral. This is a fundamental distinction according to the Vinaya.

Due to the establishment of the Vinaya by the command of the Omniscient Buddha, a monk undertakes more than nine billion precepts on completion of the ordination ceremony. Even if he becomes shameless immediately, since he is

still a monk because of the remaining training rules, he is worthy of respect and offerings from the laity. He is clearly an honourable monk who can receive the worship and respect of the laity.

To determine whether a monk becomes immoral, depraved, and fallen, numerous points should be analysed. The rules in this regard are very subtle. The Omniscient Buddha's Vinaya prohibitions and regulations are based on his incomparable power and boundless compassion, so they are profound and subtle. They are full of surprises too. Great is the nature and scope of the Vinaya discipline, which is very profound.

The Profundity of the Vinaya

How deep and subtle the Vinaya is can be understood from the following examples. A lay person, even after eradicating all mental defilements and becoming an Arahant, has to pay respect to and worship an ordinary monk who still has all the mental defilements. This is because a monk enjoys that status by having followed the Vinaya procedure. An ordinary monk must not bow to an Arahant lay person as his own status is higher. The Arahant is still a lay person, while the other is a monk. If the two are compared on the basis of mental purity, this injunction seems unreasonable.

There is a vast difference between a lay Arahant and an ordinary monk. The former has personally achieved nibbāna so his heart is always pure, while the latter's heart contains many defilements, so he is not free from the suffering of the lower realms. Yet a lay Arahant has to pay respect to a monk who is just an ordinary person. In the matter of status in the Buddha's dispensation, an ordinary monk, being a member of the Saṅgha, is nobler than an Arahant who is just a lay person. Why does a lay Arahant have to worship an ordinary monk? It is due to the Vinaya proclaimed with the supreme authority of the Omniscient Buddha. One can therefore realise that the power of Vinaya is imponderable and boundless in scope and extent. The Buddha's supreme power, immeasurable wholesome kamma, and omniscience manifest themselves in laying down these unique Vinaya rules. They have effects for every monk in the Buddha's dispensation.

Another case should be mentioned in this connection. A junior monk by one hour [or one minute] must show respect to a senior. A junior monk who is an Arahant must pay respect to and worship a senior monk, who is still just an ordinary person. However senior she may be, an Arahant nun must worship a monk who is an ordinary person. Thus a Noble One of sixty rains must revere an ordinary monk. Why? These disciplines and modes of conduct are proclaimed

by the Omniscient Buddha with his full authority, which is incomparable. They are known as "*ānāpaññatti*" — rules made by the supreme authority and boundless compassion of the Buddha.

This power that prevails in the Vinaya, and all other Dhamma powers of the Buddha are unique. The Vinaya and Dhamma take the place of the Buddha after his demise, as he declared in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: "Ānanda, after I pass away the Dhamma and Vinaya I have proclaimed and prescribed will be your teachers."

These prophetic words of the Buddha are profound, and their scope is boundless. So each of the millions of precepts undertaken by a monk during his ordination represents the Buddha himself. The prophetic words of the Buddha dwell in an ordained monk, whoever he may be.

A bhikkhu in this dispensation means a fully ordained monk who has fulfilled five factors: purity of the ordination procedure, purity of the group of monks, purity of the four formal recitations of *kammavācā*, purity of robes and bowl, and being a qualified candidate for full ordination. Once the ceremonies of taking the three refuges and formal recitations have been done, he instantly receives and undertakes the precepts. So we can say that nine billion Buddhas dwell in his person by the power of the Buddha and efficacy of the Vinaya. He is like a pagoda where the Buddha's relics are enshrined.

Everyone should know that a pagoda, even if it is made of mud or sand, is a sacred object of worship because the Buddha's relics are enshrined there. Due respect must be paid to the relics enshrined therein, which represent the Buddha, even if the pagoda is made of unworthy materials. If disrespect is shown even to this type of pagoda, one accumulates unwholesome kamma.

Even if the precincts of a pagoda are littered with dust, garbage, excrement, etc., the pagoda itself remains worthy of deep respect. So everyone should bow their heads in showing due respect to the relics, which are certainly worthy of honour. If one shows disrespect on seeing a pagoda with all sorts of rubbish nearby, one accumulates unwholesome kamma.

Similarly, an ordinary monk possesses millions of Buddhas in his person, though his mind is littered with thousands of mental defilements, like garbage near a pagoda. As long as a single Vinaya precept still exists in his person, he is entitled to be worshipped by a lay Arahant. The innumerable Vinaya precepts that exist in his person represent countless Buddhas. Though he is not free from Vinaya faults, he is like a pagoda. So a lay Arahant must revere him for this reason.

If devotees consider this matter carefully, they will realise the countless Vinaya rules observed by an ordinary monk. Moreover, they will appreciate and revere the power of the Buddha, who is fully entitled to proclaim Vinaya rules

and regulations, and appropriate procedures for their purification. The commanding power of the Omniscient Buddha shows its greatest effects in the Saṅgha established by him. The power of the Vinaya is very profound, and is hard to understand by an ordinary devotee or uneducated layman. No one can fully fathom the significance of the Vinaya's power.

Those laymen who have not yet realised nibbāna, should examine themselves to appreciate their own characteristics and status. If they reflect wisely they will willingly pay due respects to monks, even if they are shameless. All monks ordained properly in the Saṅgha under the authority of the Omniscient Buddha are entitled to receive worship and respect from the laity. So an intelligent layman will pay respect, give almsfood, and show deference, even to a shameless monk. As always, vigilance is essential for the profundity of the Buddha's rules and their wide-ranging effects to be realised.

Even in an immoral monk, part of the Vinaya's power and its effects still exist, though he has destroyed his undertaking of the precepts by committing an offence of defeat. If a scrupulous monk accuses him of defeat without proof, or at least circumstantial evidence, it is just like accusing an innocent monk. So one who accuses an immoral monk falls into a serious offence requiring a formal meeting of the Saṅgha. The Vinaya text and its commentary explain this in detail.

Considering these facts in the Vinaya Piṭaka, one should appreciate the Vinaya's power that still prevails in an immoral monk. Therefore, in dealing with an immoral monk, one must consider only the power of the Vinaya, focusing on the ordination procedure he has undergone. If these facts and powers of the Vinaya are known and understood, a lay person will be able to obtain the auspicious blessing of honouring the worthy as taught in the Maṅgala Sutta. One should focus one's mind only on the marvellous power and significance of the Vinaya that prevails among the monks, even in the person of an immoral monk.

This is correct. An immoral monk retains the powerful influences of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha even after his downfall. So these three sacred authorities become objects of worship in an immoral monk. Devotees should concentrate on these worthy things only. This proper relationship between the laity and monks accords with other teachings of the Buddha. Therein he exhorts the laity to honour the Dhamma by revering the wise, intelligent, and learned monks as they represent the knowledge of Dhamma, though they may lack some purity in their conduct. So a wise devotee objectively focuses his mind only on the monk's learning and nothing else.

The case of lay people who do not know that a monk is immoral is interesting. Thinking him to be a scrupulous monk, they offer almsfood and pay him

sincere respect. The object of their worship and respect is morality, yet this monk has no morality whatsoever. In this case they obtain suitable merits for their respectful attitude and reverential acts, though the monk, being without morality, cannot symbolise a scrupulous monk at all. So there is no "receiver", as it were. Even in this case one should not hastily judge such offerings and respect as totally useless.

The reasons for this caution can be known from ancient precedents, like the case of King Saddhātissa in ancient Sri Lanka. Cases like this provide guidance for good deeds by the laity.

The Wisdom of King Saddhātissa

Once, King Saddhātissa, knowing a monk to be shameless, controlled his mind and reformed his attitude to perform an act of reverence to this shameless monk. One day he went round the royal city sitting on his elephant. It happened that a shameless monk was fishing in the royal pond when the king and his retinue arrived at that place. As soon as he saw the royal procession, he dropped his hook and line, came up to the bank and sat quietly under a tree. Seeing this behaviour, the king wanted to offer almsfood to the monk. On returning to his palace, before taking his meal, he ordered fine food to be sent to the shameless monk, because he remembered the changed behaviour at the time of his encounter.

When the ministers arrived near the pond to offer the royal food, the shameless monk was fishing again. As soon as the king and his retinue had left, he resumed his fishing. Seeing this, the ministers' devotion and confidence disappeared. As they saw this evil behaviour in the first place they did not want to offer the almsfood. Knowing that the ministers had seen him, the monk instantly dropped his hook and line and sat quietly under a tree. The ministers had seen that he was shameless and so did not offer the royal almsfood to him. They returned to the palace and reported the matter to the king. The king asked whether they had offered the royal almsfood, they replied that they did not do so as the monk was shameless.

Then the king questioned them about the behaviour of the shameless monk when he saw them approaching. The ministers replied that he instantly dropped his fishing tackle and sat quietly under a tree. The king remarked that the monk had forsaken his shameless behaviour and shown moral shame and dread at that time. These great virtues, moral shame and dread, are two of the seven states possessed by all good persons, and are treasured by the wise. The king asked the ministers the cost of a royal breakfast. After the ministers

reported the cost of the food, he said that moral shame, dread, and remorse were more valuable, and were worthy of respect as they were true riches within the heart. He again ordered them to offer the royal food to the shameless monk in view of these essential good factors found in him at one time or another. The ministers then offered the royal food with due respect and honour. They had changed their attitude.

King Saddhātissa, being intelligent and wise, possessed the powers of confidence and wisdom, so he could show respect even to a shameless monk. Somehow he sought and found a few virtues in a shameless monk and his mind was focused on these select noble states, which he revered. By instantly showing shame and dread this shameless monk showed the characteristics of a good monk, thus becoming worthy to receive the royal almsfood. Although the recipient was shameless, the noble attitude and concentration on a few noble virtues raised the king's offering in status to the blessing of honouring the worthy. The king's wholesome attitude was a great blessing. Seeking virtues even in a shameless monk he follows this injunction from the Maṅgala Sutta.

Should One Worship Shameless and Immoral Monks?

> "Should a person, knowing a monk to be shameless or immoral, pay respect and show deference by greeting, bowing, etc? Does he or she get the blessing of reverence (*gārava maṅgala*), which says that one should pay respect to the worthy? Does this behaviour agree with the teaching that one should pay respect only to those who possess good conduct? The text referred to is in the Kosala Saṃyutta. By worshipping shameless and immoral monks does one accomplish a reliable refuge? Kindly give evidence or case histories to prove one way or the other the act of honouring bad monks."

The methods for distinguishing shameless and immoral monks have already been given. In the matter of showing reverence, the case is the same as the act of honouring the worthy ones. So the fifth question is the same as the fourth.

However, some clarification will be given here in connection with the text in the Kosala Saṃyutta (Dahara Sutta, S.i.170).

> *"Bhujaṅgamaṃ pāvakañca, khattiyañca yassasinaṃ;*
> *Bhikkhuñca sīlasampannaṃ sammadeva samācare."*

The above text means that to avoid disadvantages now and in the future, one must show due respect towards four types of persons. One must avoid

disrespect to live safely. This kind of skilled behaviour is called '*sammadeva samācare*— civilised manners."

Four Beings Worthy of Respect

One must show respect to a poisonous snake, a monarch with his retinue, a monk of good moral conduct, and a fire. By respecting these four, one acts in a civilised manner, that is, by showing due respect.

The essential points for treating each of them properly are as follows:

1. A poisonous snake must be treated with respect to avoid getting bitten.
2. A monarch, being a sovereign power, must be treated with reverence and respect, so that no danger may arise from him.
3. A scrupulous monk, because of his power, must be treated with reverence and respect. If not, danger may arise due to unwise association with him. In the past King Kalabu, King Dandaki, King Nālikera, King Ajjuna, etc. treated such monks with disrespect. So they suffered danger and harm leading to ruin.
4. Everybody must take care with fire because heedlessness may lead to serious accidents. Fire must be given due regard so that one can live safely.

All such wise, respectful attitudes amount to civilised manners. Among the above four, a snake, fire, and a monarch can cause harm at once. A scrupulous monk will not harm others. However, maltreatment and disregard by the laity bring great harm to them in the long term, so a scrupulous monk must be treated with respect.

The above canonical text gives clear guidance for all to be respectful and take heed with those who can cause harm and danger. One must try to avoid danger, and treat these four with circumspection.

The words "harm and danger" and "fear" in this case also convey the meaning of making unwholesome kamma, the arising of evil thoughts in one's own mind, and a wrong attitude that one may maintain. So in dealing with others, especially immoral monks, if one does not show respect, one will entertain unwholesome thoughts and do unwholesome deeds, and so unwholesome states increase in one's character. This is a grave danger to be avoided. With this in view one must pay respect to an immoral monk, following the injunction to have civilised manners. So by remembering this text and doing respectful deeds even to an immoral monk, it can be classified as the blessing of worshipping the

Dhamma. Paying respect in a proper way, such as treating with civility, greeting with hands held in *añjali,* thus exhibiting cultured behaviour, are also the good deed of civilised manners.

However, by treating an immoral monk with a skilful attitude and civilised manners, one will not attain the three refuges. This is because an immoral monk is not a genuine member of the Saṅgha, not a true monk. This disadvantage means that a layman fails to get a reliable refuge by worshipping him as an individual. However if the Saṅgha selects an immoral monk to receive alms, and if the lay person's mind is directed to the Saṅgha, the lay person will obtain the three refuges. In this case the recipient becomes the Saṅgha and the donor is offering his food to the community of monks. So one gets a reliable refuge due to the right motive.

In making offerings to scrupulous or shameless monks, the benefits differ. In paying respects too, the advantages differ. The difference being that one monk is scrupulous while the other is shameless. However, in both cases a layman can obtain the blessings of reverence and honouring the worthy if his motive is noble. This is a good action for him.

Civilised Manners

The behaviour of King Kosala shows that one should follow the advice to show civilised manners to all types of persons. All persons should be treated with due respect.

One day, while King Kosala was attending on the Buddha in the Jetavana monastery, some heretics happened to pass through the precincts. When the king saw them he mentioned his name and made obeisance to them in a proper manner. Why did he, a true disciple of the Buddha, do obeisance and express reverence to the heretics? The commentary on the Kosala Saṃyutta explains that if the king did not show these civilities, the heretics would have borne a grudge against him. They would have thought that the king paid respects only to the Buddha. Being neglected, they could cause trouble for the king. So the king paid homage to them out of courtesy and to avoid possible harmful effects in his country. This homage paid by the king is in accordance with the Maṅgala Dhamma and the injunction to show civilised manners, which means to treat all with due respect.

The other reason for the king's conduct was due to State Policy. In his kingdom there were numerous followers of these heretical teachers. If these people knew that the king had neglected and slighted their teachers, they might create disunity or instigate rebellion. To unify his country, the king worshipped

these sectarians and heretics for the sake of national unity. This was done to give peace and happiness to a large number of believers of other sects. This is also an auspicious deed.

Should One Criticise Shameless and Immoral Monks?

> "When a person, knowing a monk to be shameless or immoral, speaks ill of him or condemns him, either directly or indirectly, does he attract the ten evil results?[1] By doing so, is he free from evil or not?"

Those who slander or condemn others with harsh words commit serious evil only if a Buddha, Pacceka Buddha or Noble One are objects of their condemnation. In the Dhammapada it says:

> "Whoever offends a blameless man, pure and guiltless, upon that very fool, the evil recoils like fine dust thrown against the wind." (Dhp. v 125)

The blameless, pure persons are of three types: Omniscient Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas, and Noble Ones. So abusing or slandering them attracts serious evil consequences for the speaker. Abusing or slandering ordinary persons does not bring any of the ten serious results since their qualities are different.

Nevertheless, one does get a fault by accusing others as immoral since this is one form of abuse. If one abuses others or condemns them with harsh criticism, one is not free from fault. One becomes associated with evil and error. Even if one blames or slanders an immoral monk, knowing him to be such a one, one is not free from fault. Every word spoken in condemnation amounts to unwholesome speech (*pharusavācā*).

In their question the laymen have mentioned that there will be cases when others know for certain that others are immoral, and they may utter disparaging words to suppress this type of monk. However, it is very difficult to know for sure whether a monk is immoral or not. There are profound and subtle points of Vinaya that should be considered. In cases dealing with offences of defeat before the Saṅgha's courts, the monastic judges find great difficulties, and must consider numerous aspects to deliver a correct judgement. Even monks learned in Vinaya find it difficult to pronounce a monk as immoral in such legal cases.

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[1] This must refer to verses 137-140 of the Dhammapada, not verse 125 quoted here. The ten evil results are: severe pain, loss of wealth, bodily injury, serious illness, madness, oppression by the king, a serious accusation, loss of relatives, destruction of property, or fire will burn his house. (ed.)

The five Vinaya books and their commentaries give numerous guidelines to ensure that an innocent monk will escape wrong judgements. When a case of defeat appears before the courts, Vinaya judges must hear and examine the words of both parties very carefully. If the charges are false, they must declare a monk to be innocent. They must not say they are guilty if there is any reasonable doubt. Suspicion is no substitute for proof. In the courts, suspects are adjudged innocent in the absence of convincing proof.

In pronouncing judgement, the monastic judges are enjoined to seek mitigating or extenuating circumstances for an accused monk. Only when these factors are lacking, must they pronounce the decision of 'defeated.' Then a monk definitely becomes immoral according to the Vinaya rules. Three judges must separately study the case, examining the witnesses and the evidence. If one judge cannot find extenuating or mitigating circumstances to clear an offence of defeat, he must send the accused to another judge for further examination. The second judge, if he finds only guilty factors, must not pronounce him guilty, but must send him to a third judge. The aim is to find factors of innocence and extenuating circumstances because the judgement of defeat calls for grave responsibility on their part. The accused, if guilty of defeat, has broken the highest law of the courts. So such cases entail grave responsibilities for all involved. If the judges find no extenuating circumstances, they should asked the accused to stay in a quiet place to practise calm and insight meditation. They should then ask about the state of mind of the accused. Emotional disturbances, if any, should be calmed by meditation. After this practice, the judge must praise this moral deed of the monk with kind words and release him for further moral conduct. All should rejoice in this work of moral calm or the effort of concentration.

The decision of defeat is both subtle and difficult. Even after close examination, Vinaya experts find many borderline cases that they are unable to decide clearly. To burden a monk with an offence of defeat and thereby assign to him the status of an immoral monk is a grave act. So judges are reluctant to make unequivocal declarations. Why? If they pass judgement on a defeated monk correctly they escape blame and grave evil, but if they declare an undefeated monk to be defeated, they destroy the millions of precepts maintained by the accused. Even a shameless one still retains these remaining training rules. So the judges commit a grave offence themselves.

However, the judges escape a grave evil in declaring a monk to be innocent of defeat, in good faith, though the monk has indeed committed this offence. If the judges think that a monk is not guilty of the charges, they must pass judgement

accordingly.[1] In good faith and honesty, they must declare what they believe after careful examination. This procedure is described clearly in the Vinaya commentary.

So a monk or lay person who accuses a monk of defeat, burdens himself with the gravest responsibility and serious consequences. If a monk commits an offence of defeat, he becomes immoral. So to speak ill of him in terms such as "immoral" or "defeated" is like bearing the whole earth upon one's head. By condemning a monk as immoral, one is making a serious charge against him and taking a grave responsibility for oneself too. Therefore such accusations and slander should be controlled by mindfulness.

The seriousness of such an accusation or condemnation will be apparent from the following case. Whether one abuses or slanders a truly defeated monk, a shameless monk, or a scrupulous monk, one gets the unwholesome deed called "*pharusavācā kammapathā.*" This evil deed leads to rebirth in one of the four lower realms. Speaking harsh words with anger against the above three classes of monks will lead one to the lower realms in the next life.

If a person speaks harshly and angrily not only to condemn the monks just mentioned, but intending to drive them out of the Saṅgha, his evil is of the gravest kind. Technically he is charging, abusing, accusing with the aim of assigning immoral status to them. It is graver than a mere act of abusing. The important point is this: to accuse someone as immoral amounts to taking a grave responsibility for oneself.

For further clarification the cases of Koṇḍadhāna Thera[2] and Cittahatthaka Thera should be considered.

The Story of Koṇḍadhāna Thera

During the dispensation of Kassapa Buddha, Koṇḍadhāna Thera was born as a tree spirit. To test the friendship of two friendly monks he transformed himself into a beautiful woman and created suspicion between them. When one of the monks went into a grove to answer the call of nature, the woman accompanied him and came out together. When the other monk saw this, he got angry and suspicious. So he left his friend because he judged him to be immoral. When the Uposatha ceremony had to be performed, the friend refused to conduct it together with the alleged immoral monk. Even when the accused monk protested his innocence, his friend did not believe him. He said that he saw the beautiful woman coming out of the grove with him.

[1] When monks decide on cases of defeat they must use the highest standards of proof, like judges of serious crimes who must be certain before pronouncing a death sentence (ed.)

[2] Dhammapada Commentary to verses 133-134.

Thereupon the tree spirit, seeing the seriousness of his misdeed, appeared before the two friends and explained his conduct. The spirit's aim was merely to test the strength of their friendship, but the effects were dire. Disunity arose between the two friends and one accused the other of an offence of defeat.

When the tree spirit died he was reborn in hell and suffered for his evil kamma. So to accuse a scrupulous monk as immoral, gives a result as bad as the five heinous crimes, the worst evils one can commit.

The Buddha said: "Monks, these two individuals, if they do not correct themselves, will certainly suffer in hell as surely as one who carries a burden to his house, puts it down. Which two? One who claims to be a monk, though he is not, and one who accuses an innocent monk of an offence of defeat." (Itivuttaka 48, Āpāyika Sutta).

Such a false accusation, being very serious, brings certain suffering in hell for the accuser, just as a burden carried on the head, will certainly be put down on reaching one's house. One who maintains a wrong view, and one who unjustly accuses an innocent monk of defeat will, after death, fall into hell. Unless the wrong view is renounced, a person will suffer in hell. Likewise, if one does not ask for forgiveness from a monk one has unjustly accused of defeat, one will fall into hell.

Note that in this context the term "*sīlavanta*" refers to both a scrupulous monk and a shameless monk. If a monk is not immoral, here he is classified as a moral monk, that is, the same as a scrupulous monk at the time of Gotama Buddha. The tree spirit became a monk in the time of the Buddha, but due to his past misdeed, wherever he travelled, a woman always accompanied him. Although he did not see this shadowing woman following after him, others saw her. So people became suspicious, abusing him as immoral repeatedly. He finally reached Arahantship, but the resultant bad kamma had to be paid off until he attained parinibbāna. This case can be studied in detail in the Dhammapada and Aṅguttaranikāya Commentaries.

The key point to note is that the tree spirit had no intention to stigmatise or to attach fault. His aim was merely to test the bond of friendship. He had no anger against the monk. Yet the results for his evil deed were serious, bringing evil results in his succeeding lives. His evil deed in this case was that of presenting a scrupulous monk as immoral.

The Story of Cittahattha Thera

Another case concerns Cittahattha Thera.[1] During the time of Kassapa Buddha there were two monks. One wished to return to lay life, but the other

[1] Dhammapada Commentary to verses 38-39.

restrained his companion saying that being a monk was a rare opportunity. Later, however, he thought that if his friend disrobed he would get his requisites. So he persuaded his friend to return to lay life in every conceivable way until his friend renounced monkhood. When he became a monk in the dispensation of the Buddha Gotama, due to his evil deeds, he suffered shame by returning to lay life seven times, and the people blamed him. Hence his kammic results were grave indeed (see the Dhammapada Commentary for details).

The point to note here is that mere persuasion to forsake monkhood caused a monk, in the time of the Gotama Buddha, to suffer humiliation due to his capricious behaviour. His evil act was praising the status of a lay life to encourage a monk to leave the Saṅgha. Thus one can understand the weight attached to being a member of the Saṅgha. No one should speak to a novice or monk in praise of returning to lay life. One should not even urge one's sons and grandsons to leave the Saṅgha if they become novices or monks. One should not speak in favour of lay life.

Many lessons can be learnt. Blaming or accusing a scrupulous monk with evil intent, charging him with immorality, etc., are deeds that bring serious bad results in the present and future. The Buddha's dispensation and Vinaya are unique and powerful. So one suffers greatly by living outside the dispensation for many thousands of lives. Moreover, even if one attains monkhood, one has to bear the burden of shame and difficulties. One should note the basic and consequential effects too.

Abusing or accusing a monk with charges of defeat means the evil deed of abusive speech. This evil deed is similar to holding firm heretical views, and has serious effects. One will suffer in various ways throughout a series of lives.

There is a supplementary question to this one, "If one blames, criticises, or condemns a monk either directly or indirectly, what results will one get?"

There are two ways in which the blameworthy actions of a person can be stated: directly to the individual concerned, or regarding facts of a general natural in impersonal terms.

Blaming Individuals Directly

In the matter of blaming an individual directly, there are two ways: speaking directly to the person concerned, or speaking indirectly. Such blame or accusation, whether direct or indirect, brings fault to oneself if one has the intention to harm or attack others. One therefore obtains demerit in either case. So in criticising or blaming, one must avoid slander and other harmful speech, such as disparaging others and praising oneself. If the mind is free from anger, malice,

jealousy, and divisiveness, and if the criticism is based on mutual benefits, one can blame others. In making remarks, oneself and others should be treated impartially. Honest criticism must be made within these guidelines.

If these factors are present in one's criticism of others, one is free from fault and evil. Moreover, one is following the instruction of the Buddha which says: "He praises the praiseworthy. He blames the blameworthy." So it is commendable if the good factors are present in the mind and if the facts are correct.

Criticising in General Terms

To criticise in general terms, without reference to anyone in particular, is exposing of faults. One must attack or criticise unwholesome states only, such as greed, hatred, or delusion. In this correct way of criticism the four right efforts should be cultivated.

1. The effort to prevent unarisen unwholesome states.
2. The effort to eradicate arisen unwholesome states.
3. The effort to arouse unarisen wholesome states.
4. The effort to develop arisen wholesome states.

Unwholesome states that may arise in oneself in the future are called "unarisen unwholesome states." Future evil that may be committed by oneself must be prevented with one's own moral effort. Evil deeds one has already done are "arisen unwholesome states." Among the ten unwholesome deeds, killing is mentioned, but this relates to killing of sentient beings generally. The discourses of the Buddha specifically mention five heinous acts *(pañcānantariya kamma)*, such as killing one's own father or mother, which are the gravest evils with immediate consequences.

In this infinite round of rebirth, existences in which an ordinary person knows the true Dhamma are very few. One must undergo many lives in which ignorance and delusion predominate. The lives in which an ordinary person holds wrong views are innumerable. So the evil act of killing can be done many times even within a single lifetime, let alone the number of such acts in countless previous lives. If a person commits one heinous unwholesome deed in the present life, it will give definite results in hell. The misdeeds done in countless past lives will then give their results too.

In this present life, too, many persons have committed acts of killing several times while young, which will be clear to each individual. Others have done past misdeeds of killing though they refrain from killing in this present life. Most people have done evil deeds such as killing in both the past and present lives.

Personality view opens the way to commit evils of the gravest kind, such as killing one's father or mother, or harming the Buddha. If one still believes in a soul, and entertains doubts about the Three Gems, in future existences one might kill one's mother or father, getting the gravest evil and the worst result. So besides killing living beings, there may be heinous misdeeds too. If a detailed analysis is made of one's own various misdeeds, one cannot safely declare that there is a cessation of the act of killing, in the matter of ordinary or extraordinary types. If a person does not kill any sentient being today, he may commit this evil tomorrow, next month, next year, or next life. So please ponder like this: "Due to wrong view and doubt I could certainly kill my mother or father, cause schism in the Saṅgha, harm the Buddha, or kill Arahants."

This is, of course, the "unarisen evil" mentioned above. Future evil deeds and past or present evil deeds are classified as "unarisen evil" and "arisen evil" respectively.

Why does a person perpetrate these various types of evil, pertaining to the past, present, and future? It is due to the existence of personality view. With this wrong view one will certainly do small and great evil. What is personality view? It is the belief that one's own five aggregates are a soul, a person, a self, or an entity. This sense of "I" gives rise to the worst kammas. Both arisen and unarisen unwholesome kammas will not lose their power if personality view still exists. They are bound to increase due to wrong understanding of the nature of the five aggregates. So if circumstances are favourable, one will commit various crimes, great or small, propelled by wrong view. When personality view is eradicated, all past evil deeds and their potential results are destroyed totally. Countless evil actions cease. The ten evil deeds and the five heinous crimes are based on personality view. Personality view is their leader. Evil deeds are its followers, and its consequences.

Can one entertain any hope of cessation of evils or deliverance? If one encounters the Buddha's dispensation in this life and practises insight meditation, one is delivered from personality view, root and branch. All past evils are wiped away, and countless effects of past evil that were due to mature also cease. Total eradication of evil is possible in this dispensation only because correct methods have been given. Human beings possess the rarest chance to overcome this appalling predicament. During this dispensation, good and rare chances are available for the destruction of countless new evils that are bound to arise in the future. All latent evils are uprooted by mindfulness as taught by the Buddha. If these methods and rare opportunities exist, it is called the Buddha's dispensation. The dispensation is said to disappear when such opportunities no longer

exist. Everyone should note that if death occurs today and life continues in an existence where these opportunities don't exist, the dispensation disappears today. In this case the opportunities of this dispensation are lost as soon as one dies.

This rare opportunity and grave danger should be appreciated by everyone. Moral dread, together with farsighted trepidation *(saṃvega)*, must be cultivated while one is alive and the dispensation still prevails. One must practise concentration and insight daily with great urgency. To get rid of personality view and doubt is the noblest aim in life according to the teaching of the Buddha. Morality and insight practice are essential to eradicate mental defilements and evil deeds. When one practises morality and insight meditation, mental purity and skilful deeds arise. By these means one obtains the four great moral efforts. Wholesome deeds, both arisen and unarisen, must be done in this present life.

The Essence of the Tipiṭaka

There are only three essential points in the three Piṭakas:

1. The higher training in morality *(adhisīlasikkhā)*.
2. The higher training in concentration *(adhicittasikkhā)*.
3. The higher training in wisdom *(adhipaññāsikkhā)*.

The essence of the teaching means morality, concentration, and wisdom. Keeping the five, eight, or ten precepts is called morality. Concentration means neighbourhood concentration *(upacāra samādhi)* and absorption concentration *(appanā samādhi)*. Wisdom means insight knowledge *(vipassanā-ñāṇa)*, path knowledge *(magga-ñāṇa)*, and fruition knowledge *(phala-ñāṇa)*.

Among these three essential practices, morality is of the arisen type because it is already done or presently kept. However, concentration and wisdom belong to the unarisen type of wholesome states. Although many people practise concentration such as recollection of the virtues of the Buddha *(Buddhānussati)*, or mindfulness of the body *(kāyagatā sati)*, they usually reach only the initial stage with the aim of getting merit. Their efforts are not sincere, not mature, so not even neighbourhood concentration is attained. The firm type of concentration necessary for liberation is still an unarisen wholesome deed. Many Buddhists count their rosaries chanting *suttas*, or reciting "*anicca, dukkha, anatta,*" but they fail to win insight knowledge. Although they accumulate merit, their insight knowledge is a sham as it cannot eradicate the perception of and belief in a person, a being, a self, or a soul. They fail to gain insight into psychophysical phenomena, or ultimate truths. Genuine insight, which means the complete,

well-developed stage, is not attained by slack effort and weak wisdom. Therefore their wisdom is also of the unarisen wholesome type.

Even in the matter of morality, which has been classified as already arisen, many can retain it only for short periods, so they achieve only temporary morality. They fail to reach the full, stable stage called "*samuccheda sīla*"—morality by cutting off defilements." Only when one obtains stable moral conduct can one safely be said to be a truly moral person.

Regarding the precept of refraining from killing, most attain only momentary morality. The majority of people, if they observe the five precepts or this single one, achieve good conduct for a short period like a flash of lightning in the darkness. They get this moral achievement several times, but they lose it several times too. So their morality shows the characteristic of instability.

This is true. In countless past lives the attainment of momentary morality by restraint from killing has occurred frequently. One achieved the status of a moral person in many past lives. Yet these achievements in morality, being temporary, do not give real security and complete safety. This type of temporary moral conduct is superficial and unreliable. For example, today one may possess moral conduct, but tomorrow one may become shameless and immoral due to breaking a precept. Morality is achieved for one month only to be lost in the next. This uncertainty applies after death to. In this life one may be scrupulous, but in the next life one may be shameless. So a scrupulous monk, a good man, a moral person in this life may become a robber, a murderer, a thief, a hunter, or a wicked person in the next.

Even famous saints who have attained *jhāna,* and can fly in the air with their psychic powers, may become robbers, murderers, thieves, hunters, or wicked persons in their next lives. Though they encounter this rare dispensation, they fail to appreciate the significance of the unique opportunities now available. If they remain satisfied with temporary morality, they will be reborn as ghosts, animals, robbers, murderers, etc. They will suffer in hell due to the fallibility of their moral conduct, which is the characteristic of temporary morality.

This fallible, temporary morality is available even outside the Buddha's dispensation. It exists naturally just like the world and its environment. It is common everywhere, and at all times. It even exists in other universes where no Buddhas ever arise, where the Buddha's teaching can never be heard. In countless universes, many human beings, deities, and brahmās live without the benefit of the Buddha's teaching. Yet they achieve the status of human beings, deities and brahmās as a result of this temporary morality. However, their moral conduct is impermanent, so they can fall down in moral status. The important

point is that this common, temporary morality cannot be classed as true morality, which is available only during the Buddha's dispensation. Temporary morality is not the true dispensation. Only the unique morality called "*samuccheda sīla* — morality by cutting off defilements" is the true, stable morality belonging to the Buddha's dispensation. It means infallible morality, genuine morality.

The Folly of Ignorant Persons

Common, superficial, and temporary morality must not be overvalued, since it is unstable, and not genuine. To illustrate, the folly of ignorant persons may be cited. Those with mystic powers are very rare, it is hard to meet such a person even once in a lifetime. Once, an ignorant, foolish person met such an adept, and was granted a boon. He asked for the purgative medicine that is commonly available in every household. Thus he lost his precious opportunity to get rare, precious things.

One day a foolish villager met Sakka, the king of the gods. When Sakka granted him a boon, the foolish man asked for a match and a matchbox that would light fire immediately. Sakka gave him these things, but matches are common things in the world. The man received nothing of any value.

In Ava, during the sixteenth century, a king, while hunting, met a powerful adept who granted him a request. So the king asked for a nymph so that he could enjoy the greatest sensual pleasures. He achieved his desire, but the enjoyment of sensual pleasure is commonplace. Moreover, the king got lost and the nymph disappeared. He got his satisfaction only once and then died in the forest with a deranged mind, longing for the nymph.

The above stories clearly show that this rare chance must be grasped with knowledge and wisdom so that it is advantageous. When the Buddha has appeared and his very rare dispensation still exists, a disciple must not rest content with common and inferior temporary morality, which is unreliable. A wise person must strive for the rare and precious stable morality, which is priceless and unique. Those who think too highly of momentary and unstable morality are like those foolish persons who asked for common things when granted a boon. The defect of temporary morality must be appreciated.

What is Stable Morality?

The moral conduct that culminates in the attainment of path consciousness is called stable morality. Morality is a supporting condition for the path. With the attainment of the path, morality becomes stable and irreversible. From this

time onwards, a person will not kill any sentient being, great or small, under any circumstances. He or she always maintains morality with steadfast confidence and wisdom. The precept to abstain from killing living beings becomes stable, so he or she is totally free from suffering in lower realms. In future lives too he or she will never be shameless or immoral. The Noble One is firmly established in natural morality and natural goodness, so can never become a robber, a murderer, a hunter, or a thief. A Noble One cannot be reborn in hell, as an animal, hungry ghost, or demon. Due to stable morality, a Noble One avoids these inferior existences. These are the powers and benefits of stable morality, which is only achievable in this dispensation.

This stable morality becomes known only when a Buddha appears in the world for the unique benefit and welfare of all, and remains only during the Buddha's dispensation. It is the essence of the Omniscient Buddha's teaching, so those who claim to follow the Buddha's teaching, whether they are lay persons or monks, must emulate this rare type of morality. Only stable morality is worthy of respect. One should not rest content with temporary morality nor should one emulate it. Why not? Even those who keep the millions of bhikkhus' precepts, still live under the sway of temporary morality if they fail to attain the path. Even very pious and venerable monks also suffer from the effects of temporary morality. Sooner or later, they will become robbers, murderers thieves, liars, etc. Moreover, possessors of temporary morality will have to suffer in hell. These so-called holy men are not so much different to others regarding their destinies. All of them value and maintain temporary morality. All of them are fallible, and all are subject to life's vicissitudes due to loss of their morality.

Therefore a disciple of the Buddha, while this unique dispensation still exists, should appreciate the defect of the commonplace arisen wholesome deed of refraining from killing, which means temporary morality. One should not be satisfied with this state of affairs as it lacks any genuine or lasting value. Common morality is like a piece of sodium in water, it flares brightly for a moment, then dies instantly. What each person urgently needs is the unique, stable morality so that true, secure moral purity will be established. The real taking of refuge is in stable morality. Everyone has a duty to transcend the unreliable temporary restraint, and to eradicate the possibility of becoming shameless or immoral due to the bad roots in the heart. To attain stable morality one must make great efforts so that complete liberation from shamelessness and immorality is gained in this life.

Nowadays good moral conduct is only momentary. Everywhere, good people observe the five precepts and some good monks train themselves in the millions

of Pāṭimokkha rules. Both these householders' and monks' moral conduct are just temporary morality. However if they develop wisdom to achieve stable morality, they get a wholesome deed that has never arisen before. Each precept can be classed as "temporary" or "stable." So one should reflect deeply on the true nature of the good deeds that have already arisen in oneself.

The Most Urgent Task

Today, every ordinary person possesses the five mental hindrances to a great extent. Due to their power, many people break rules of discipline and universal moral principles, as they did in the past. These are symptoms of modern times. The majority of Buddhists, though believers who acknowledge the importance of insight, still maintain the hindrances in their hearts. Even most Dhamma teachers, though they teach the true Dhamma regarding life's three characteristics, cannot eradicate these five hindrances completely. Defilements still arise in their hearts, so they lack insight into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self. The only way to overcome these moral failures and inherent weaknesses, is to practise concentration *(samatha)* according to the teaching of the Buddha. With this mental discipline, the wavering mind and distracting thoughts are inhibited. Then the mind can be turned towards insight practice, which reveals the universal characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self.

The troublesome mental hindrances should be suppressed by means of *kasina* meditation, contemplation on the foulness of the body, or some other meditation. This moral effort to suppress evil thoughts is called concentration or tranquillity *(samatha)*. Tranquillity of mind fixed on a single object is the goal at this stage of mental development. The next stage aims to penetrate the true nature of the five groups of existence, or the mind and body. This wisdom can see the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and insubstantial nature of existence with insight.

These two features, concentration and wisdom, exist while the Buddha's dispensation lasts. This practice and its goal help all devotees to get rid of personality view — the persistent belief in a soul, the dogma of self-view, self-centredness, base egoism. All ordinary persons, since they still believe in a soul or self, are under the influence of ignorance and craving. By destroying this wrong-view of a permanent self, one also destroys, in due course, all ignorance and craving. As long as self-view remains in the heart, one cannot completely escape from the stigma of being shameless and immoral. Though one attains morality, one can maintain it only for a short duration due to self-view. One fails to attain stable, natural morality due to this wrong-view. This failure to attain

natural and stable morality is to be feared. Those who, without right view, attain morality and goodness, will certainly kill an Arahant in future lives, or commit the gravest evils such as killing their mother or father. Moreover, due to self-view they will change their faith in various ways, accepting eternalistic or nihilistic views. The universal ways of most ordinary persons are like this. They cannot safely say that they will always refrain from killing. Their mental processes remain wide open to various types of good and evil kamma. Both tendencies exist in every ordinary person who is not a Noble One, and has not realised the Four Noble Truths.

Therefore the most urgent task for everyone is to strive for the final liberation from shamelessness and immorality, to attain stable and natural morality. Starting from this present life during the Buddha's dispensation one must arouse the unarisen wholesome deeds of concentration and insight with fresh, vigorous moral effort.

This section explains the nature and case of unarisen wholesome deeds. Here ends the ways to practice the four great moral efforts (*sammappadhāna)*.

If one wishes to blame or to criticise shameless or immoral monks in impersonal terms, one must speak within the meaning of the four great moral efforts.

The correct way to blame a bad monk is as follows:

When one sees or hears about a shameless or immoral monk, one must see beyond the personal features to unwholesome states in the ultimate sense such as greed, anger, or delusion. Due to the appearance of shamelessness and immorality such unwholesome states are seen or heard about. If one considers carefully, blame should be put only on these unwholesome states, as shown in the commentary. The correct method of blaming is to blame shamelessness and immorality only in general terms. Attacks must be made on the existence of the root cause of evil, not on the persons who commit evil.

Attack Only Unwholesome States

One should blame and criticise unwholesome states as follows: greed is shameful, filthy, wicked, degrading, coarse, and unskilful. Greed causes only trouble and so is shameful. In the next existence it will cause one to suffer in hell. Such criticisms must focus on unwholesome states only. Shamelessness and immorality certainly deserve to be criticised, by all means.

The next method must be applied to oneself in relation to others' mistakes. Reflection on one's own mind must be made as follows: "I have thousands of such unwholesome kammic seeds from countless past lives and also in this life. I am not altogether free from shamelessness and immorality. Even if I accumulate

wholesome deeds sometimes, if I become self-satisfied, I will have to endure the results of countless past evil deeds, which will certainly produce their effects in the four lower realms. In past lives I have surely done various evils that will bear fruit now or hereafter." Such reflection on arisen evil is a duty for all.

The next procedure is as follows: "This person has done evil due to the power and influence of greed, hatred, and delusion, and has become shameless or immoral. He is very weak due to these evil forces. Why does anyone commit evil? Because one retains the root of all evil — self-view, which always accompanies evil deeds, shameless deeds, and immoral deeds. It is self-view that gives rise to all these evil things for ordinary persons. So the real culprits are greed, hatred, and delusion, headed by self-view. Such latent evils still exist in me, and will bear fruit sooner or later, so I am in the same boat as shameless, wicked, and immoral persons. If I am satisfied with temporary morality, the tendency towards evil will make me shameless or immoral tomorrow, next week, next month, or in the next life. These evils will affect me again, and I may kill my mother or my father in the future due to self-view. This is the way to reflect on unarisen evil in oneself.

The third correct procedure for consideration is as follows: "Why has this monk, who previously maintained morality, now fallen into immorality? He was self-satisfied as a good monk with temporary morality, and failed to develop it to the stable stage. This was the cause of his moral downfall. Temporary moral achievement is not reliable. This type of morality soon disappears like a firework display. I must strive to achieve stable morality. This is my greatest duty." Such considerations must be made daily by everyone.

The fourth procedure for consideration is this: "This monk, while moral, rested content with it and failed to practise concentration and insight as taught by the Buddha. So this good, scrupulous monk still accepted self-view, which made him commit evil, great and small. Although he was good before, later he did bad things, becoming immoral. Likewise, if I am satisfied with temporary morality and fail to practise concentration and insight, this pernicious self-view will make me do all sorts of evil in the coming days, months, years, and lives. I will surely become just like this immoral monk. Self-view must be eradicated by wisdom. In these ways one must consider the wholesome states not yet arisen. If these considerations are made, one is partially following the practice of four right efforts.

The evils of being an ordinary person are too numerous to count, so innumerable dangers exist too. Seeing the evils and dangers of an ordinary person, a far-sighted person gets moral dread and a sense of urgency. His mind always inclines towards concentration and insight meditation to overcome moral weaknesses, whenever he sees the faults of others. He uses these facts for self-exami-

nation and self-reform, and strives earnestly to eradicate these defects in himself. So everything helps him to obtain earnestness and spurs him to action. This superior way of self-reform through far-sighted trepidation is the way of noble persons like bodhisattas, sages, and all civilized persons. This is the ancient, noble way of self-analysis.

This path to deliverance is excellent. All bodhisattas, in their final lives, have to see an old man, a sick man, and a dead man as universal signs for all. This gives them a sense of urgency and spurs them to renounce the world. This noble renunciation is possible because they apply these hard realities to themselves and reflect on them wisely. So they obtain great dread of worldly existence, for the world is full of terror, which can be revealed by insight.

The case of Venerable Revata thera illustrates this point very well. Revata, the youngest brother of Venerable Sāriputta, was persuaded by his parents and relatives to marry young to avoid becoming a monk. When the marriage ceremony was about to begin, Revata was told to pay homage to the elders. The old people blessed him with the customary words of "long life." When young Revata saw an old, decrepit lady, he experienced moral fear as he knew he must meet this fate too. He applied the hard facts of life to himself based upon the suffering of others. Gaining far-sighted trepidation, he renounced the world and became a monk.

Likewise, whenever one sees others' faults, one should apply them to oneself to create moral dread and a sense of urgency. By following these impersonal methods of criticism and blame, when one hears about or meets shameless or immoral monks, one practises the four great moral efforts with attendant benefits.

The Dhamma Saṃvega Method of Blaming

We have given guidelines for correct criticism of shameless or immoral persons without personal references. Here we will also mention the way of blaming even with personal attacks. In this method one can even mention names when making condemnation, but two factors must accompany this type of blaming with personal reference. One is that a person speaking ill of others by name must possess the attitude called "*Dhamma saṃvega.*" The other mental attitude is called "Moral fear." These attitudes, fear of unwholesomeness and moral fear, will free a person from faults when he condemns others by name.

An example will clarify this point. If a mother sees her son playing with foul things such as excrement, she will instantly run after him to remove these dirty things from his body. While she hates excrement on the body of her son, she still loves him and kisses his cheeks several times. She only washes away the foul things from his body by touching them and throwing them out. Although

touching excrement is not praiseworthy, out of love and compassion, she does it. Although she throws away the excrement, she does not throw away her son. She washes his body, because she hates foul things only, not her son.

Likewise, if one sees or hears about anyone doing evil deeds one must think thus, "My relatives have foul, impure things on their bodies, they are defiled by filth. How pitiable they are. Due to delusion they are eating excrement and are contaminated with foul things." Such loving, helpful thoughts arise in a good person. All human beings are brothers and sisters even when they do great or small evils. So a critic who see others' serious crimes must reprove the immoral acts without hatred. With compassion he must help others to remove their faults if possible. If all one's efforts are futile, one must cultivate compassion or equanimity, as a mother, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to rescue her son from a well, shows compassion and equanimity until the end.

Similarly, a teacher or a friend must instruct, guide, and train a wayward pupil or a bad monk with great compassion and wisdom. After several attempts fail to produce positive results, compassion is the best course, then equanimity at last. The important point is that anger, resentment, ill-will, or remorse must not be allowed to intrude. One must reprove the evil acts, or unwholesome states only. One should condemn bad actions without personal grudge, without hatred. In this way a critical teacher or a righteous lay person will obtain wholesome kamma in scolding, admonishing, or reproving others, even with personal references. Unwholesome motives are absent in following this method of direct criticism. One should not get angry because of others' evil deeds. This explains the correct way of wise condemnation, which must be made skilfully.

Can A Shameless Monk Become Scrupulous?

> "If a shameless monk becomes afraid of suffering in saṃsāra, or if he acquires moral dread, how can he become a scrupulous monk? Is it possible for him to become a scrupulous monk?"

There are two types of scrupulous monks: a temporarily scrupulous monk, and a naturally (stable) scrupulous monk.

How one can attain temporary morality has been explained in the first answer. With regard to complete moral attainment, the answer was given in the reply to the sixth question.

The essential point is this: attainment of temporary morality is concerned with good thought-moments. Thus a monk becomes shameless if he deliberately breaks a Vinaya rule in full knowledge of it. At this time he is a shameless monk.

If he purifies his offence in the proper way he again becomes a scrupulous monk. Even the arising of the intention to purify his misconduct or transgression makes him scrupulous again. So his motivation is crucial.

Although he is free from any offence or guilt due to his reformed mind and acts of confession, he still possesses only temporary morality. So the next stage is more important. This is the stable stage due to the complete elimination of self-view. The destruction of self-view is essential to become a naturally scrupulous monk.

In the question the terms, "a good person" *(sappurisa)* and "shameless" *(alajjī)* are used. He is called "scrupulous" if he purifies the evils that arise at the body door and vocal door only. A good person or a good monk, in the technical sense, means one who has purified his mental door, that is, he has achieved mental purity too. Thus the mere attainment of scrupulous status does not signify "a good person," a mentally purified one.

The essential point is that the Vinaya rules, if obeyed, guard against evils in the physical and vocal spheres only, which are gross. Purification of the mental sphere is not taught in the Vinaya and no offence arises if only mental evils appear. The Vinaya text declares that there is no offence in the mind door. No form of confession is found in the Vinaya for mental wrongs. No rules for mental discipline are given in the Vinaya.

So every monk, if he learns and practises the Vinaya rules very carefully, obtains physical and vocal good conduct. By abandoning these gross evil things one becomes scrupulous. However, innumerable faults and mental defects, which are not Vinaya offences, remain to be eradicated. They are evil, unskilful states. A good person needs to practise the virtues of a good person, which I have mentioned earlier. Only when these factors prevail can a monk or layman be classified as a good person.

Should Lay Persons Learn the Vinaya?

> "Should lay persons learn the Vinaya? Does this agree with the Maṅgala Dhamma that advises one to be well-trained in discipline *(vinayo ca susikkhito)?* What are the good or bad results of this act? Kindly give evidence or examples to prove a definite point. Should a monk teach the monastic discipline to a lay person? What are the good or bad results of this? Please give some evidence."

In the Maṅgala Sutta the Buddha teaches that one should be well-trained in Vinaya. The meaning of this Maṅgala Dhamma is that laity should learn *a lay*

person's discipline properly, that is, to learn it wisely. For laity there are disciplinary rules to learn civility and gain prosperity, such as the characteristics of a good man, the universal code of ethical conduct, the rules of a householder, etc. They should be learnt and practised wisely.

For monks, too, there are Vinaya rules to know and observe so that the factors of a scrupulous and good monk will be achieved in full. The aim of learning discipline is to make one a scrupulous, modest, and good monk. So the monks' code of conduct is for homeless persons, but it is different from the homeless lay person's code of conduct *(Anāgārika Vinaya)*. Each group must follow the appropriate code of conduct. Householders must follow their rules to become moral and good, and monks must follow their Vinaya without transgressing any rule, whether partially or completely. No taint should be overlooked. This means the correct and full observance of Vinaya so that the benefits in this life and hereafter are achieved in full. Since blessings arise for monks it is called a blessing. The text does not mean that laity should learn monks' Vinaya to obtain blessings.

The term "well-trained in discipline" is explained in the commentary on the Maṅgala Sutta as follows: "There are two kinds of Vinaya, one for laity and the other for monks. The lay Vinaya means avoidance of the ten unwholesome kammas. A lay person shuns these ten evil kammas with a pure heart and humble attitude. With the aim of not spoiling his morality he respectfully observes the training in full. This is the meaning of the term 'well-trained'."

Regarding the monks' Vinaya, the commentary explains that a monk must observe the seven classes of rules with complete confidence. If he has no defects he gets the honour of practising well. Moreover he becomes truly learned by this means. Besides the seven classes of offences, the rules for monks include the morality of fourfold purification. By observing these four trainings a monk can reach the highest stage of sanctity, the perfect purity called Arahantship. If one diligently practises the rules to reach this noble aim, one is called "well-trained."

So the commentary clearly shows that a lay person must learn a lay person's Vinaya. For monks there is the code of conduct described in the Vinaya Piṭaka. If lay people and monks both learn and practise their respective codes of conduct they are called "well-trained in discipline." The advice in the Maṅgala Sutta does not convey the sense that laity should learn the monks' Vinaya. The term "well-trained" does not mean mere academic study. Academic knowledge is useless in this sphere. What "well-trained" means here is that a monk diligently follows the Vinaya rules in practice. So "to be well-trained" also means "to be learned." The main point is that without following the Vinaya rules devotedly

one does not deserve to be called "learned." Mere academic knowledge becomes useless if it is not put into practice.

The discipline for lay people is clearly mentioned in the Sutta Piṭaka. In brief, a lay person must shun ten unwholesome kammas and cultivate ten wholesome kammas. The ten unwholesome kammas are called '*dasa akusala kammapathā.*" The ten wholesome kammas are called "*dasa kusala kammapathā.*" Here the words "well-trained in discipline" encompass two factors: purification of defilements, and devoted practice of moral discipline. These two essential factors should be learned and practised by the laity.

As regards the factor of "purification of defilements" one should study the Book of Tens in the Gradual Sayings to know the practical significance in detail. The Pāḷi text in the Aṅguttaranikāya explains the four factors of defilement for breaking the first precept. "One kills by oneself. One advises, urges, or incites others to kill. One speaks in praise of killing. One consents to the act of killing." The first two factors are obvious and need no explanation.

I will explain the factor "One speaks in praise of killing." In Buddhism, every ethical precept and moral duty is a profound matter to know and practise with wisdom and insight. An ordinary person, seeing how riches increase for those who make their livelihood by selling meat often speaks in praise of these men becoming rich. Some may utter words in support of killing. Such praise of killing amounts to two defilements of his morality. The person breaks the non-killing precept and defilements also arise. If another person, on hearing praise spoken, follows the occupation of a fisherman or slaughterman, one who praises their actions transgresses the precept that says "I undertake to abstain from killing living beings." Even though he does not actually do the killing, he has expressed approval of killing, and his motive is to prompt others to kill. So, like the killer himself, the supporter is also guilty of killing.

However, mere praise without inciting others only amounts to the defilement of morality, even though another person may follow a wrong occupation or do unwholesome deeds. In this case, one who praises the act merely defiles the precept.

The fourth factor is being pleased or expressing approval when one hears about the killing of murderers, or robbers after their arrest, or if they are killed while being arrested. It also means being pleased about the killing of wild tigers, elephants, snakes, etc. Other cases include: satisfaction on hearing news about the death of one's enemies. Longing for the destruction of bugs, cockroaches, flies, ants, rats, or other pests also means defilement of one's precepts. Some people are pleased when animals are killed, because they are gluttonous. They

willingly express support and pleasure at the killing of animals. Though this does not amount to killing, they taint themselves with approval, which spoils the moral precept.

Some people give an excuse and express enjoyment by saying that the meat and fish are for almsgiving. One should analyse each case carefully to know its true nature. One must consider the state of mind. Those who express approval of killing for almsfood or a feast should examine their motives. These grey areas need scrupulous consideration.

For ceremonies and festivals some kill the animals themselves, some take delight in it, and others praise these acts. Some monks, who want to eat good food, hope for it. So killing by indirect orders is done to satisfy the wishes of monks and guests. Butchers and fishmongers wait for this indirect sign from the servants of donors who wish to feed thousands with sufficient meat and fish.

The factors for guilt regarding the precept of not killing are listed in the commentary. It is stated that one of the factors of guilt is "giving indirect signs, or hinting." So in the above instances, servants of the donors either break the precept or defile it. As for the commission of evil kamma (that leads to hell) one must consider all the factors of a particular case. Some borderline cases are difficult to judge decisively.

If the servants are guilty of full transgression, donors cannot be free from evil kamma, and recipient monks and guests also cannot be free from blame. If meat is doubtful on three counts: seeing, hearing, or suspecting the act of killing, monks must not eat it. To be allowable within the Vinaya rules, meat must be free from all three factors. If a monk knows that an animal was not killed for him, he has no doubt, and so this meat is pure in all three ways. Only this type of meat and fish is allowed by the Buddha. If a monk eats meat when he is doubtful about its origin, it is a Vinaya offence. Those who offer such doubtful almsfood, receive mixed results if they mix good and bad kammas in their meritorious deeds.

Mixed Kammas Give Mixed Results

As mentioned earlier, one who does deeds with mixed motives gets mixed results. Due to his generosity he gains wealth, influence, and power. However, due to the accompanying unwholesome kamma he suffers untimely death. Kings slay him to confiscate his immense wealth, his property is stolen frequently, his house is burnt down, or he suffers from various diseases. Why is this? When he performed good deeds it was associated with some unwholesome kamma. So an unblemished result is not possible for a whole series of lives. This type of kamma is a mixture of black and white. In other words, such moral deeds have been

planted with poison at their bases, so to speak. So the four factors of the immoral deed of killing will be present in such a deed. One should note that if only one factor is present, morality is stained, which is the minimum bad effect. Moreover a person destroys the factor of being well-trained in discipline. That is why the crucial words, "Well-trained means purification of defilements, and devoted practise of moral discipline"[1] are used in the Maṅgala Sutta commentary.

A lay person must observe the five moral precepts to the best of his or her ability. He or she must know the nature and factors of evil and good deeds in each case.[2] Four factors will amount to either unwholesome or evil kamma in the first precept. The remaining nine misdeeds, if transgressed with the four factors,[3] amount at least to unwholesome kamma: stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh speech, idle chatter, ill-will, covetousness, and wrong view. So the ten evil deeds become forty in total, with each factor promoting unwholesome or evil kamma.

Those who abstain from each evil deed, in all four aspects, are the practitioners of the Maṅgala Dhamma "well-trained in discipline." They become truly modest, scrupulous, and good people. The Buddha taught the ten evil deeds with the four factors and their characteristics. One must observe them fully to be free from taints and the four corresponding evil kammas.

The essential factors according to the teaching "devoted practise of moral discipline" are explained in the Sīgālovāda Sutta, which is commonly called "the lay person's discipline." In it one will find a householders' duties and virtuous conduct explained in detail. Like the Maṅgala Sutta, the Sīgālovāda Sutta is famous.

Therein, the duties of children, parents, teachers, etc., are taught as disciplines for householders, so it is called the householder's Vinaya. If children practise their five moral duties to their parents they achieve the status of a good person as well as the Maṅgala Dhammas. Conversely, children who fail in these moral duties destroy the Maṅgala Dhammas and fail to achieve the status of a good person. The exposition in the commentary is very clear. Therefore everyone needs to fulfil their moral responsibilities, and to follow the path of great and noble virtues based on knowledge and insight. If customary duties concur with the teaching in the Maṅgala and Sīgālovāda Suttas they should be followed with devotion. Among lay people, few perform these universal moral duties in full.

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[1] *"Tattha asaṃkilesāpajjanena ācāraguṇavavatthānena."*

[2] Lay Buddhists should scrupulously apply the four factors to each of the ten unwholesome deeds. This exercise will reveal many defilements. (ed.)

[3] One does it oneself; one advises, urges, or incites others to do it; one consents to it or condones it; one speaks in praise of it.

This section explains the meaning of the Maṅgala Dhamma "well-trained in discipline" in relation to a lay person's Vinaya. Lay people have a natural discipline called "Good conduct" *(sucarita vinaya)*, and "Virtuous conduct" *(ācāra vinaya)*, which they should try to maintain in full with faith and diligence. This ethical conduct was prescribed for the laity by the Buddha, so they do not need to learn the Vinaya for monks.

However, wise lay persons who want to promote the Buddha's teachings, and are well versed in their own discipline, do need to learn the monks' Vinaya. Why? Those who are well-trained in the householder's discipline become truly good people, so their minds and motives are good. If they are well controlled by the lay person's discipline, after learning the monks' Vinaya, they will not use their knowledge unwisely. They will not defile themselves with impure physical, vocal, and mental actions. They will not accumulate evil motives and evil kammas because of this new knowledge. In the commentary it is mentioned that a wise, learned brahmin, after listening to the monks' Vinaya rules in detail, developed a clear mind and strong faith in the Saṅgha. He appreciated the power and significance of the monks' Vinaya as clear understanding had revealed its profundity.

One day a devoted brahmin heard the monks reciting their Vinaya rules. Appreciating the benefits of these numerous rules he entered the Saṅgha. Thus one's own attitude and motive are crucial to evaluate the knowledge of Vinaya rules and the diverse conduct of monks.

The way for a lay person to study the Vinaya is first to learn and practise the lay person's Vinaya, which gives culture, wisdom, and knowledge. A lay person must be dedicated to observing lay ethics with perfect integrity. If integrity is lacking, a lay person, though learned in ethics, becomes a hypocrite with sham morality. He or she becomes a bad person. This type of lay person, who learns the monks' Vinaya, will develop a fault-finding attitude. Seeing only the offences and weaknesses of monks, he or she will blame, slander, and abuse them. So there is no benefit for such a lay person in learning the monks' Vinaya. Since he or she fails to learn and practise the lay person's Vinaya well, he or she lacks fundamental virtues and a skilful mental attitude. So it is futile to learn the monks' Vinaya, since he or she will criticise the conduct of wayward monks, interfering in the affairs of others. Such a person who quotes the Vinaya texts and blames the monks, makes evil kamma because he or she lacks the virtues of a good and moral person. Due to these defects he or she takes a superior stance, uttering words of condemnation and slander. Thus, grave evil kammas result from his or her learning.

Seeing only the bad conduct of a wayward monk, he or she blames him, but this gives bad effects. Concentrating on the faults of others, he or she fails to see their virtues. If the monk has not committed one of the offences of defeat, the fundamental morality of a monk remains intact, but it is not seen by his detractor. These remaining precepts are more than nine billion. An educated lay person sees and blames the committed offences only, not the fundamental morality, which still exists. The critic does not see the virtue of this fundamental morality, but sees the defects of the monk only. Thus the evil that he or she gets in the act of condemnation is not due to the defects of the monk concerned, but due to the monk's status that still prevails. So a critic gets numerous evils in speaking against this Dhamma.

Those with an undeveloped mind and a weak character often see the faults of others. Inevitably they slander, abuse, and use harsh words against those who commit evil deeds. They castigate monks who are of poor moral character. If this type of lay person learns the monastic discipline, he or she foolishly accumulates evil kammas due to lack of restraint. Therefore only disadvantages exist for such a person in studying the Vinaya.

Those who accuse immoral monks with unfounded charges suffer evil just as if they accused a scrupulous monk. Monks get an offence of *Saṅghādisesa,* which is very grave. The Vinaya text declares, "*Asuddha hotipuggalo aññataraṃ pārājikaṃ sammāpanno.*" The meaning is that those who accuse monks of immorality are themselves impure. The term "immoral" means, in the final analysis, covetousness or greed, ill-will, and wrong view. *Akhanti* means impatience or surliness. *Aññāṇa* means ignorance or delusion *(moha)*. *Kossajja* means laziness or moral slackness. *Muṭṭhasati* means lack of mindfulness or lack of clear comprehension.

The Four Purifying Moralities

> "Kindly give the detailed factors or characteristics of each of the four purifying moralities *(pārisuddhi sīla)*. You may give each its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause."

1. Pātimokkha Restraint

A monk who is an ordinary person is liable to fall into offences, and he must confess his offence with the determination to avoid it in future. The purity of restraint is re-established by this act of purification, and protects the monk against future misdeeds. In curing his offences, a monk sincerely promises, "I will not do this again." This decisive mind must be present during confession.

2. Sense Faculty Restraint

The above two factors also co-exist in the morality of sense-faculty restraint — guarding the six sense-doors. To purify the faults in the matter of sense-faculty restraint is very subtle and difficult. One must use mindfulness at the six sense doors to get moral restraint and moral purification.

3. Two Factors of Livelihood Purification

1. Not accepting or using unallowable food and other requisites. Only allowable food and requisites must be accepted according to the Vinaya rules.
2. If unlawful food and things are accepted due to ignorance, a monk must quickly purify his guilt by suitable Vinaya procedure mentioned in the texts, then purity of livelihood is restored. Curing this kind of offence involves the abandonment of unlawful things and making a confession. In some cases, where breaking purity of livelihood does not amount to an offence, a monk must abandon the unlawful things, making a determination to observe restraint in the future.

In the sphere of observance of this morality there are three aspects: acceptance of four lawful requisites according to Vinaya rules, using them conscientiously, using them within the allowable time limit.

4. Morality Concerning Requisites

A monk must reflect when using food, robes, dwellings, and medicines with the above three factors. Wise reflection should be practised so that a skilful attitude and clear comprehension arise. To practise morality is difficult and profound. Why? By using a rosary, a monk normally reflects wisely on the four requisites, thus purity of this morality is gained. One might therefore think that this is easy. However, mere counting of beads and recitation of good words and thoughts are not sufficient to fulfil this morality. Mere awareness or correct mindfulness on the four requisites, though necessary, is not enough. For a monk, subtle attachment or clinging to robes, food, and dwellings are difficult to eradicate, despite recitations, counting of beads, and right thoughts. A monk needs very strong mindfulness and insight to abandon this subtle craving. So whenever he uses the four requisites he must develop the power of consideration to the full with complete awareness. Only when the four types of attachment cease, is this morality satisfactorily attained. Purity is obtained on the use of things after strenuous noble efforts. Hence customary counting of beads and mere verbal repetition cannot fulfil this morality. He must concentrate on the full meaning and significance of the Pāḷi texts for the arising of clear knowledge.

If this knowledge fails to arise, morality concerning requisites is not attained. Lacking this deep insight, four types of attachment prevail in the heart.

One can know whether this morality is attained or not by observing the behaviour of a monk. A monk who attains this moral purity has no attachment or greed. He will not accumulate possessions, wealth, or property. He will not exhibit attachment to lay supporters. He will live in any type of monastery, in every season, under difficult conditions. He will accept rag robes, alms food, dwellings under a tree, and putrid medicines, all of which were highly praised by the Buddha, though they are coarse types of simple living. If a monk chooses and selects only good monasteries, eats only good food, hopes for only good dwellings, and longs for them, he fails to achieve this sublime morality, and is impure in this respect. So a monk must know the factors leading to the attainment of this important morality and practise vigorously and systematically to get the necessary factors of achievement.

What Are the Effects of Transgressing Morality?

> "Among the four purifying moralities, what are the bad effects if a monk transgresses basic monastic restraint *(Pāṭimokkha saṃvara sīla)*. What are the good effects if a monk observes it? Kindly explain the remaining three types of purifying morality, which may have good or bad effects according to observance or non-observance."

In the matter of breaking basic monastic restraint, we must distinguish two types: offences of defeat, or any of the six grades of lesser offences. Among the remaining six types of discipline, offences belong to two classes: offences according to worldly standards, and offences according to the rules of Vinaya.

Regarding guilt in the matter of defeat, he commits the gravest offence in this dispensation. As long as he remains in robes he is classified as an immoral monk. If he renounces a monk's status, he becomes pure even if he does not immediately reach the status of a layman, a novice, or a hermit. However, since he remains as an immoral monk in the Saṅgha, serious faults and guilt arise as mentioned in the Aggikkhandhopama Sutta, Ādittapariyāya Sutta, Piṇḍola Sutta, and others. The Visuddhimagga also explains the gravity of immorality in detail. Day-by-day he gathers serious misdeeds. This immoral status produces grave evils.

We can cite plenty of examples of the bad results for immoral monks. Some immoral monks during the time of Kassapa Buddha, who died without renunciation of monk status, were reborn as hungry ghosts in the Gijjakūṭa mountain.

They suffered until the time of Gotama Buddha. The Nidānavagga Saṃyutta of the Vinaya (under the fourth Pārājika), mentions their pitiable plight. It is also mentioned in the Vibhaṅga. Teachers will explain these texts in detail.

Regarding the remaining six classes of offences, those who do not undergo the required purification become shameless, and offend against the Buddha's discipline, thus getting a further serious fault. If broken, the Vinaya rules create a danger called *"paññattikkama antarā,"* a danger obtained from breaking the Buddha's command. So immoral monks can attain neither *jhāna,* nor the path and its fruition. Moreover, when they die, they suffer in hell. Shameless monks suffer likewise. We will cite an example here as support for this statement.

In the Dhammapada commentary, a monk suffered for his misdeeds and was reborn as Erakapatta nāga. Even breaking minor precepts without knowledge, if they are guilty according to the worldly rules and regulations, creates bad results. See the cases of the ogres Sūciloma and Kharaloma. They broke the ordinary precepts of the world and were reborn as spirits or ogres. As for the good results for the observance of morality, the Visuddhimagga has mentioned them in detail. Moreover, Visuddhārāma Mahāthera mentions the respective good and bad results clearly in the Paramatthasarūpabhedāni. The good or bad results of observing or breaking the remaining three moralities can be found in that book.

In the Jātaka commentary *(ekanipāta)* one who breaks the morality of reflection on the use of requisites suffers in the lower realms. One monk was reborn as a louse due to attachment to his robes. The Vinaya experts and ancient teachers say that attachment to allowable things lawfully acquired does not amount to full commission of evil leading to hell *(akusalakammapathā).* So here the bad results the monk suffered are due to attachment, and other serious Vinaya guilt.

What Are the Factors of Saṅghikadāna?

> "What are the factors of offerings made to the whole Saṅgha *(saṅghikadāna)?* How can we perform this type of donation?"

The Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta of the Majjhimanikāya mentions seven types of *Saṅghikadāna:*

1. Offerings to both Saṅghas headed by the Buddha.
2. After the parinibbāna of the Buddha, offerings to both Saṅghas.
3. Offerings to the Bhikkhu Saṅgha only.
4. Offering to the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha only.

5. Offerings to selected bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs as the Saṅgha's representatives.
6. Offerings to selected bhikkhus as the Saṅgha's representatives.
7. Offerings to selected bhikkhunīs as the Saṅgha's representatives.

When making such offerings, one should focus one's mind on giving to the Saṅgha. So the Buddha classified seven kinds of Saṅgha. This *Saṅghikadāna* brings the greatest benefits for all. Before making the offerings, the donor should meditate on the nine virtues of the Saṅgha. He or she should banish the idea of personal references or personal attitudes towards any individual monk, regarding the whole Saṅgha as the recipient.

How is this attitude possible? A donor must not choose individual monks according to personal preference. He or she must suppress any likes and dislikes. The intention to offer to the Saṅgha must focus on the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. Avoiding personal preferences, one should regard any monk as the representative of the Saṅgha. One should reflect thus: "He is a son of the Buddha, a representative of the Saṅgha, and therefore represents all the virtues of the Buddha's first five disciples, the sixty Arahants who were the first missionaries, the one thousand Arahants of the Uruvela Forest, and other Arahants like Venerables Sāriputta, Moggallāna, and Mahākassapa." Thus the supporter concentrates his mind on the virtues of the whole Saṅgha and, in this way, donates *Saṅghikadāna.*

The commentary says, "Even in offering to immoral monks who only wear the robes around their necks, if one focuses the mind on the Saṅgha, it amounts to offering to the eighty great Arahants lead by the Venerables Sāriputta and Moggallāna." The good results one gets are the same. This is possible because the Noble Saṅgha, the true sons of the Buddha, by their powerful virtues, permeate influences and honour even today. The offering is beneficial not because of the monks' immoral nature, but because of the purity of the Saṅgha.

Thus, a donor must focus his mind on the purity and power of the Buddha's Noble Saṅgha. So even when offering to immoral monks, such good influences and benefits prevail if the mind is skilfully directed. So offering robes to immoral monks, amounts to offerings made to Arahants, past and present, who have completely eradicated the defilements. This Dhamma support gives *Saṅghikadāna* the greatest benefits. In offering food, dwellings, etc., the donor must pay regard to the Saṅgha only. So he becomes a supporter of the Saṅgha — all the greatest disciples of the Buddha.

In making offerings to the Buddha image, although the Buddha had passed away, the act amounts to the same nature and result. So building Buddha

images, pagodas, etc., gives the title "Supporter of the Buddha." The mind should be directed towards the support and offerings to the Omniscient Buddha himself who has passed away. So the title "Supporter of the Buddha" does not mean the image, but the Buddha himself.

With the devotional mind on the Buddha himself one can now set one's attitude correctly in making *Saṅghikadāna* even to ordinary monks. For example, take the case of those who have many children. Although some children may die, other children remain, so when the parents die, the remaining children inherit their property. Likewise, all types of monks today inherit the Dhamma nature of the past noble sons of the Buddha. They act as recipients, representatives, and heirs. So in the acts of offering and sharing of merits, one must hold the Saṅgha in mind and dedicate the offering to the Saṅgha as a whole *(Saṅghagatā)*. The cultivation of this crucial "*Saṅghagatā citta*" is vital. While one invites some monks, and physically offers donations to them, one focuses the mind on the Saṅgha, which is "*Saṅghagatā*" decision. One must, of course, offer food to a particular monk, but the attitude should be on the Saṅgha. Present-day monks will use the property or take the food very respectfully if they know that it is *Saṅghikadāna.* Improper use makes them serious offenders as it taints the whole Saṅgha.

The first type, offering to both Saṅghas headed by the Buddha, can be attained by offering to the Buddha and his followers by declaring "*Buddhappamukhassa ubhatosaṅghassadema.*" The attitude must be correct. Now that the Buddha has attained parinibbāna, to perform this first type of *Saṅghikadāna,* one must place a Buddha's image containing holy relics, with a begging bowl, in a suitable place. Then after making offerings to the Buddha's image, food and requisites must be offered to bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs. Images with relics to represent the Buddha are used to maintain the highest honour and respect among the donors. This is a special case. Ordinary Buddha images can take the place of the Buddha though there may be no true relics present. The attitude, if noble, produces the same result.

As regards the second type of *Saṅghikadāna,* the meaning should be clear and no further explanation is necessary.

The third type of *Saṅghikadāna* can be obtained by offerings made in front of a Buddha's image with holy relics. The procedure is the same.

As regard the offerings for the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha, today it is impossible as no bhikkhunīs exists.

The above four types of *Saṅghikadāna* are always performed by inviting monks in general for alms. The invitation must be made with the Saṅgha in mind.

Regarding the fifth, sixth and seventh types of *Saṅghikadāna,* they are classed under the main type called *"Uddissaka Saṅghikadāna."* The cases are as follows. A donor has insufficient means to feed hundreds of monks in a monastery. Hence he asks the chief monk to send a few monks for his alms-giving in the house. The chief monk then selects representatives of the monastery. The donor must neither choose nor select monks; neither can he name them. The term "*Uddissaka* — selected", means selection made by the chief monk to represent the whole Saṅgha.

In this *"Uddissaka Saṅghikadāna"* if a lay-supporter fails to purify his mind or maintains the wrong attitude many evils arise if he or she thinks in terms of names, status, or persons. In the commentary it is explained thus:

"A person thinks, 'I will offer *Saṅghikadāna,*' and makes well-prepared food. Then he goes to the monastery and asks for a monk to receive alms. Choosing by lots, the Sayādaw sends a novice. Seeing this young novice as a recipient the donor is disappointed, as he was expecting a Mahāthera. So his confidence is destroyed by his wrong mental attitude. If his confidence wavers he cannot attain this noblest almsgiving called '*Saṅghikadāna*' even if is pleased at getting a Mahāthera. In both cases, due to his wrong attitude, he fails to maintain the idea of 'Donation to the Saṅgha,' which is the noblest intention." In ancient times, the Sayādaws, due to frequent invitations for *Saṅghikadāna,* prepared a list of monks to be sent by lot, irrespective of age and status.

If a donor asks for an elderly monk, the Sayādaw must not agree with this request. He must send a monk or monks by ballot, selected according to a list already prepared. So one may get a novice although one has asked for a Mahāthera. Anyhow one's intention of donating to the Saṅgha must not be shaken, whatever the nature of a monk or a novice may be.

To give *Saṅghikadāna* the donor must cultivate the thought of 'donation to the Saṅgha' to the highest degree. Motive alone counts whatever the situation is. Just as Venerable Sāriputta and Moggallāna, with the eighty great Arahants, are worthy of receiving food and shelter, the present-day Saṅgha obtains the same privileges due to the power of the Saṅgha. Even if one gets a novice for offering almsfood, one should keep in mind that the Saṅgha is the recipient, not the novice. This novice is a means to an end, not the end itself. Considered in this light, one should not have any personal preferences in the matter of *Saṅghikadāna.* Only then is this unique *Saṅghikadāna* attained.

A weak person with a wrong motive will find this type of donation the most difficult thing in the world. He or she fails to maintain the idea of donation to the Saṅgha when his or her wishes are thwarted. One must not feel either regret

or joy in getting a particular monk. With clear intention and firm determination one must not look at "faces" or the "world." If these disciplines are present then one obtains the rare opportunity of offering "*Saṅghikadāna.*" It is very difficult to perform this kind of meritorious deed, as the mind is tricky.

Even if one gets a young novice or an immoral monk, one must treat him just like one would treat the Venerable Sāriputta or Venerable Moggallāna. The correct attitude must be placed on the Noble Saṅgha only. So every respect and honour must be paid to him. Any prejudice or partiality must be removed. If complete impartiality is lacking, the donor's mind fails to focus on the Noble Ones like Venerable Sāriputta. His mind remains with the present young novice or shameless monk to whom he has to offer food. His mind is limited to such a person and the limitless range of mind becomes tainted and its purity destroyed.

In this context, the commentary gives an interesting account from ancient times. Once a rich man, wanting to offer *Saṅghikadāna* for his monastery, asked for a monk from the Sayādaw. Though an immoral monk was sent, he paid respect and honour to this depraved monk and sincerely made offerings to the monastery with his mind fixed on the "Saṅgha." He presented ceiling cloths, curtains, and carpets. Then he treated the immoral monk just like one would treat a Buddha. He always paid respects to him. When others blamed him, he replied that although an immoral monk was the recipient, he offered his donation to the Saṅgha only. He explained that he was not approving of the bad actions of the immoral monk as his mind was fixed on the Noble Saṅgha. He donated it to the Saṅgha, though an immoral monk had to accept it. Thus right motive and right understanding amount to "*Saṅghikadāna*" — the greatest donation of all.

In the Tipiṭaka, it is stated: "If, with a pure, devoted mind, one pays respect to the Noble Saṅgha even if one offers food to an immoral monk, one is actually offering food to the Buddha. So the act is the noblest one."

Although it is not mentioned in the question, I give a graded list of persons worthy to receive alms, as given in the text. An animal, an immoral lay person, a moral lay person, hermits with *jhāna* outside the Buddha's dispensation, Noble Ones,[1] Paccekabuddhas and Omniscient Buddhas — a total of fourteen types of individual. Moral lay persons means those who live outside the Buddha's dispensation, who are moral. Those with morality in this dispensation are included under those striving to become Noble Ones, in this dispensation.

The commentary states: "A lay person possessing morality is liable to attain Stream-winning if he practises the Noble Path. So he is practising rightly

[1] There are four types of Noble Ones who have attained the four paths, and four types striving for the four paths — eight in all. (ed.)

(supaṭipanno), and worthy of honour and respect. If one offers food to a man professing Three Refuges, with a pure mind, one gets immeasurable benefits due to this qualification. Many powerful benefits arise for him. If one honours a person who keeps five precepts by offering food, this is the best among donation to lay persons, and brings limitless benefits. If a person keeping ten precepts is offered alms, the donor gets even more benefits. As for offerings made to a Stream-winner, this is supreme among donation performed by ordinary persons. The point to note is that those lay persons with five precepts who have confidence in the Three Gems are in line to become Stream-winners. Therefore such a lay person is a well-behaved person worthy of respect and honour." This is the explanation of the commentary. Following this line of thinking and behaving, one can appreciate the value of donation giving to ordinary monks and novices whatever the state of their morality.

The texts mention that persons outside the Buddha's dispensation (non-refuge taking persons) can be classified as immoral lay persons, and as moral lay persons. In this respect classes of lay people, novices, and monks inside the dispensation are not mentioned. In the commentary, classification is made for the persons inside the dispensation on similar lines. So it is clear that scrupulous monks and novices are worthy of respect and honour.

However, the question is "Can shameless or immoral novices and monks be classified under the fourteen categories mentioned already?" Teachers hold different opinions. However, in the Milindapañha a sound decision is made when the king asks: "What is the difference in virtue between an immoral layman and an immoral monk?"

"O king, an immoral monk has greater virtues than an immoral layman in ten ways. They are inconceivable in an immoral layman while an immoral monk possesses them in full. What are they? An immoral monk possesses ten virtues:

1. He pays respect to the Omniscient Buddha.
2. He pays respect to the Dhamma.
3. He pays respect to the Noble Saṅgha.
4. He pays respect to his companions in the holy life.
5. He hear and learns the Tipiṭaka and its commentaries.
6. Although he has broken the rules and lives without morality, when he enters an assembly of monks he instantly takes the sign and behaviour of modest monks.
7. He guards his deeds and words due to fear of peoples' criticism and blame.

8. His mind inclines towards to concentration and insight from the position of a lay disciple. He yearns for the state of a good layman.
9. He is still classified as monk.
10. When he does immoral acts he perform them in secret. This means he has shame in his mind.

Not one of these good qualities exists in an immoral layman, so an immoral monk is more honourable than an immoral layman."

We have already mentioned the Singhalese king, Saddhātissa who, could pay respects to an immoral monk due to his insight. He could see the noble quality — fear of criticism and blame — in that immoral monk. That unique quality, as mentioned in the Milindapañha, is the seventh reason that he is worthy of respect. Another virtue he saw in the immoral monk was the tenth one — doing evil deeds furtively due to moral shame and fear. If a person can detect and appreciate at least these two virtues of an immoral monk he is called a wise man. With wisdom he knows the power of these great virtues, even in a bad person.

If an immoral monk still claims to be a monk, in the technical sense he is a monk because unless he relinquishes the robe he cannot be classed as a layman. He is not a novice either. His status remains above the position of a layman or novice. The power of the Vinaya has to be stressed repeatedly, otherwise many will underestimate it.

The questioners ask a supplementary question, "If alms is given to an immoral monk, can it achieve great, beneficial results for the donor?" It should be noted that for a donor, an immoral monk can be worthy of receiving gifts by ten purities known as "*Dakkhiṇavisuddhi*", giving great benefits for benefactors.

1. An immoral monk wears robes, and carries a begging bowl, which are sacred symbols expressing the determination and intention to destroy defilements.
2. In the style of hermit and monk he behaves in several ways correctly.
3. He is still within the protection of the Saṅgha.
4. He still retains the Three Refuges.
5. He still lives in a monastery where concentration and insight are practised diligently.
6. He seeks refuge in the Saṅgha.
7. He practises and teaches the Dhamma to others.

8. He relies on the Tipiṭaka as a light of wisdom. His mind is inclined towards the Dhamma.
9. He believes that the Buddha is the highest and the noblest person in the three worlds.
10. He observes some Uposatha and ethical precepts.

So these honourable and pure things help a donor to obtain great benefits when gifts are offered to him. Giving alms to him brings immense benefits for a donor, not because of his serious fault, but because of the ten purities. After all, he still retains a monk's status. If an immoral monk returns to lay life by confession and declaration, he forsakes his monk status and becomes a layman.

Several cases can be cited regarding the importance of a skilful attitude and motive. A laywoman, seeing a very bad monk, failed to show respect and honour to him. She did not offer almsfood as usual. So a teacher instructed her as follows: "Lay disciple, in this encounter with the dispensation your eyes now see a monk. This alone is an auspicious, and rare event. Consider the series of lives in which the dispensation does not exist, where no true monks can be seen with the physical eyes. It is a rare chance you have now having seen a monk in robes, going for almsround. Why create hatred, greed, and delusion at this noble sight, which is a rare opportunity. This "seeing of a monk" is greater merit than achieving kingship, lordship, or rulership. It is greater than the glory and power of Sakka, king of the gods. Even the greatest brahmā cannot get this unique opportunity when there is no dispensation. Seeing the "form" and robe of a monk only once has a greater glory and power them seeing Brahmā. In this infinite saṃsāra, encounter with the Buddha's dispensation is very rare. It is an auspicious event just to see a monk."

Then the teacher asked the laywoman how much the food cost, and how could one estimate the value of seeing the monk's robe. Even if she had asked for such an encounter by giving one hundred kyats, it is impossible for the monk to come daily. Even hundreds of thousands of kyats could not offer this rare opportunity of seeing the robe. Hence this immoral monk is giving her the greatest benefit by showing the robe before her eyes so that the importance of the Buddha's dispensation can be realised. The laywoman should therefore show gratitude and honour to the immoral monk. From that day onwards, due to this wise instruction, she devotedly offered almsfood to this monk too. Her confidence became clear and strong. This skilful attitude is mentioned in the Milindapañha as "*Anavajjakavacadharaṇatāyapi dakkhinaṃ visodheti* — he helps to purify the gift by wearing the robe of the blameless ones." (Miln. 257)

Another case stresses the fact that even seeing the monk's robes is a rare good chance. One day a hunter saw a monk's robe in a grove. Since a monk's robe is a symbol of Arahantship, he felt great joy, inspiration, and reverence, so he worshipped it. After his death, he was reborn in a celestial realm due to this merit. This meritorious act, with right contemplation, is called "*Cīvarapūja*", reverence for the robe. It also means "paying honour to those worthy of honour." This deity became a human being during the time of the Buddha, entered the Saṅgha, and attained Arahantship.

Among the ten virtues of an immoral monk, some create suffering and grave dangers for a wayward monk if he does not immediately return to lay life. However, for a clear-sighted lay person, who makes skilful donation with the purity of the giver, all ten virtues become causes for meritorious thoughts, speech, and deeds. For ignorant and uncultured lay persons, these ten virtues in an immoral monk become causes for demeritorious thoughts, words, and deeds repeatedly.

One may ask, "Why does the Buddha teach us that if alms are given to an immoral monk, only small benefits can be achieved?" In teaching the fourteen grades of persons, the progressive beneficial results are clear. A scrupulous monk is just like good soil. This can be seen by studying numerous stories in the Dhammapada. It clearly shows that less benefits result from offering alms to an immoral monk. Much greater benefit accrues from giving alms to a scrupulous monk.

Anyhow, one must use clear-sighted evaluation, seeking or regarding all aspects in performing charity. The Buddha gives many guidelines for different situations and conditions that might face a donor. In the Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta (M. iii. 253), fourteen grades of alms recipients are enumerated. First giving food and shelter to animals brings benefits of one hundred times. Giving alms to an immoral person brings benefits a thousand times. Giving alms to a moral person brings benefits a hundred thousand times. Giving alms to a non-Buddhist who is free from lust [through attaining *jhāna*] brings benefits millions of times. The benefits from giving alms to a well-behaved person who is striving for the attainment of Stream-winning are immeasurable, so what can be said of giving alms to a Stream-winner? Then one gets even greater benefits from giving alms to one striving for Once-returning, a Once-returner, one striving for Non-returning, a Non-returner, one striving for Arahantship, an Arahant, a Paccekabuddha, and an Omniscient Buddha. Thus giving alms to the Buddha achieves the greatest immeasurable benefits.

Regarding immeasurable benefits, the term "immeasurable" has a range of meanings. The grains of sand in one town are immeasurable. The grains of sand

in the world are also immeasurable. So the term "immeasurable benefits" has a wide range of meanings.

In the progressive list of fourteen types of recipients, gifts offered to each type have less benefit than the next. The results depend on the virtue of the recipient. Compared with the results of giving alms to a shameless person, giving to a scrupulous person produces more benefit. So persons of the highest moral conduct will provide the donor with the highest benefits. Gifts to the Omniscient Buddha give the best results of all. Comparisons should be made according to the virtue and wisdom possessed by recipients. Today the chance of offering almsfood to Noble Ones is very rare. The chance to offer alms to ordinary monks is relatively common. Given the present situation, offering of alms to ordinary scrupulous monks must be regarded as almsgiving with great fruit and benefit. This is the rational and practical way to classify persons today.

The above is a general remark only. The Arahant is highly praised by the Buddha. Only the best moral monk, the Arahant, gives the best results. So in this context an ordinary scrupulous monk cannot produce both great results and great benefits. Only giving alms to Arahants produces these two features. Hence the words of the Buddha must be interpreted according to their context.

Which is the Best Offering?

> "Of the two types of donation, offerings to the Saṅgha and offerings to the Enlightened One, which has greater merit?"

In the Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta the Buddha says, "*Na tvevāhaṃ Ānanda kenaci pariyāyena saṅghagatāya dakkhiṇāya pāṭipuggalikaṃ dānaṃ mahapphalataraṃ vadāmi.* — In no way, Ānanda, does a gift to an individual ever have greater fruit than an offering to the Saṅgha."

The Buddha spoke in the clearest terms. Therefore we cannot say that alms given personally to the Buddha is superior to *Saṅghikadāna.*

In the commentary too it is explained: "*Saṅghe cittīkāraṃ kātuṃ sakkontassa hi khīṇāsave dinnadānato uddisitvā gahite dussīlepi dinnaṃ mahapphalatarameva.* — With one's mind respecting the Saṅgha it is possible to get more benefit from alms offered to the Saṅgha, even if the monk is immoral, than giving alms to an Arahant as an individual." Thus the commentary is definite on this crucial point in agreement with the Sutta. These words are also clear.

In the Pāḷi text too, the Buddha tells his step-mother, "*Saṅghe Gotami dehi. Saṅghe te dinne ahañceva pūjito bhavissāmi saṅgho ca.* — Give it [the robe] to the Saṅgha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Saṅgha, the offering will be made both

to me and to the Saṅgha." It is also clear here that the Buddha's instruction is to prefer *Saṅghikadāna* to donations to individuals.

When his step-mother offered two sets of robes, the Buddha accepted only one set. Then he uttered the famous words just quoted. Why did he urge Gotamī to offer robes to the Saṅgha saying it has greater benefits? In the past, disputants created a controversy from this by saying that alms offered to the Buddha is inferior, so for greater results he made this instruction.

In the commentary to the Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta the disputants' view is rejected.

> *"Nayimasmiṃ loke parasmiṃ vā pana,*
> *Buddhena seṭṭho sadiso vā vijjati.*
> *Yamāhuneyyānamaggataṃ gato.*
> *Puññatthikānaṃ vipulaphalesinan'ti.*
>
> *Vacanato hi satthārā uttaritaro dakkhiṇeyyo nāma natthi. Evamāssā cha cetanā ekato hutvā dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāya bhavissanti'ti dāpesi."*

The meaning is that the Buddha's instruction to Gotamī in this case was not because *Saṅghikadāna* is superior even to donation to the Buddha. This is not the meaning. As a recipient of donations no one is greater than the Buddha himself. Therefore the Buddha's aim is as follows: If Gotamī offers the robes to the Saṅgha she will obtain the effects of three good intentions of making donation again (before, during, and after) after he accepts the first donation, which promotes three good intentions for her. So there are six good intentions in the two acts of donation, which give Gotamī countless blessings and beneficial results bringing her peace and happiness for a long time. With this aim he instructed Gotamī to offer the remaining set of robes to the Saṅgha, praising the benefits of *Saṅghikadāna.*

Then it may be asked, "Does the above explanation contradict the discourse already quoted?" There is no contradiction. Among the various donations to individuals, exception must be made in the case of donations to the Buddha. So it is not contradictory.

Another method of explanation may he given here. The reason is this. Since Gotamī will certainly attain *parinibbāna* as an Arahant bhikkhunī, this robe-offering has no further effects for her. One set of robes is sufficient for the Buddha and the second set is unnecessary for him, but the Buddha has no personal preferences for any individual monk. Therefore he instructs Gotamī to offer them to the Saṅgha. The aim is to protect and develop selflessness and to let the power of the Saṅgha be known.

Anyhow this explanation may not fully satisfy the requirements of the question. Then a good, reasonable answer may be given to make a definite decision. The question is, "Is individual donation to the Buddha superior to the seven types of *Saṅghikadāna?*

The Buddha's teaching: "In no way, Ānanda, does a gift to an individual ever have greater fruit than an offering to the Saṅgha." is clear, and no controversy should arise. The question should not be asked at all because it is not suitable to declare that any one of the seven types of *Saṅghikadāna,* is superior to individual donation. It is unsuitable to answer because an individual recipient cannot be said definitely to be superior. Considering all these facts, the Commentary's explanation is correct, which correctly explains the Pāḷi text.

Here I present some cases for thoughtful persons to consider. When donors were offering food to the Buddha, they saw him in person. After he attained parinibbāna, many devotees made offerings to Buddha images as individual donation to the Buddha. Is this merit greater than *Saṅghikadāna* now? The next problem to consider is: "Which is greater merit? Building pagodas or Buddha images, and offering food to them as individual donation, or *Saṅghikadāna* such as offering a monastery to the Saṅgha? These problems are offered for consideration because in the Vimānavatthu it says: *"Tiṭṭhante nibbute cāpi, same citte samaṃ phalaṃ. Cetopaṇidhihetu hi, sattā gacchanti suggatiṃ* — whether one actually sees the Buddha in person or not, if the mind is fixed on him, it has the same effect as the intention is the same. Many beings go to celestial realms because of this correct attitude, although they do not actually see him." Only mind can help one to achieve heavenly attainment and nibbāna. If the motive is the same, the effects are the same. Confidence can be present in Buddha's presence or in Buddha's absence.

However, to have equal confidence in both cases is very unlikely. If one sees the Buddha in person, one's confidence may be much greater than in seeing a Buddha image. How wide this gap will be is hard to decide. To what extent can a mental object give rise to confidence? Wise persons should consider these problems.

Cultivating A Skilful Attitude

Having answered the thirteen questions, I will give an admonition so that the right attitude and motives can be cultivated. Serious consideration should be given to the essential guidelines taught in the Bālapaṇḍita Sutta (M. iii. 169). The simile of the blind turtle should be remembered by everyone.

The Simile of the Blind Turtle

"O monks, I will give you a simile: A man makes a hole in a log and sets it adrift in the ocean. When the wind comes from the east the log drifts westwards. When the wind blows from the west, it drifts eastward. Similarly, north winds push it to the south, and south winds push it to the north. In the ocean is a blind turtle who surfaces only once every hundred years. Is it possible that the blind turtle would put his head up through the hole in the log?"

The monks replied that normally it would be impossible, but in the infinite duration of saṃsāra a chance might occur. Yet it would be very difficult for the blind turtle to meet up with the drifting log. Then the Buddha explained.

"Monks this rare chance, this freak occurrence is possible, but for a bad man who is reborn as an animal or in hell to become a human being again is rarer and more difficult."

Rarest is the human status. Once this rare status is gone one finds greatest difficulty to be reborn again as a human being. Why? In the lower realms such as hell, no opportunities exist for the performance of wholesome deeds. So, lacking good conduct, a person in hell has to suffer for countless aeons. Those who are reborn in the animal kingdom have to struggle for existence, preying upon each other. Animals do mostly harmful deeds with their low intelligence, and the strong persecute the weak. So there is little chance for them to be reborn in the human world. The lowest probability exists for them to upgrade themselves.

For a blind turtle wandering in the ocean to encounter the hole in the log is possible only if the log never rots, and only if he lives for millions of years. Yet a much smaller chance exists for a sufferer in hell to achieve human status again, for very few wholesome kammas are possible in the lower abodes. This is explained in the commentary.

Indeed, this is true. When close to death, a human being urgently needs good thoughts to achieve a good status in the next existence. During one's last thought moments, previous wholesome kammas produce good mental objects, enabling one to be reborn in the fortunate realms of existence. Otherwise bad kammas will predominate at this crucial moment, and bad mental objects will send one to hell. In the four lower realms of existence a sentient being knows nothing of the value of almsgiving, keeping moral precepts, or practising meditation. Lower beings who find themselves lacking wholesome kamma are further hampered by the lack of opportunities to do good. Observe the daily behaviour of dogs, pigs, cows, buffaloes, crows and other animals. Their moral sense is very limited, so they often indulge in evil deeds. They have little chance to do good.

Therefore a dying being in the lower realms has a very slim chance of experiencing good mental objects to gain higher existences. Evil kammas usually manifest, leading again to realms of misery. Even a virtuous person in this human world cannot safely say that, at the moment of death, immoral kammas will not influence the next rebirth. Although one may have given alms, observed morality, and performed other meritorious deeds, one may experience very bad thoughts at death. Without regular practice of the four right efforts, no one can guarantee the arising of good thoughts. Every ordinary person has done countless unwholesome kammas in past lives and in this existence, which can mature at any time, producing corresponding results. For the majority of people today, wholesome kammas are relatively few. So their past immoral kammas will have to produce results in future lives.

One's present wholesome deeds may not stem the tide of past unwholesome kammas with their impending results, which must give appropriate results at some time. As a universal principle everybody is subject to moral responsibility. All types of kammas are waiting for their chance to mature at any time. Thus, countless past kammas of various types remain for each person as latent forces. If a foolish person now gathers fresh evils, the chance of past misdeeds giving their effects increases, for like begets like.

For those who have to suffer in hell even once, the floodgate of past evil kamma opens, letting in the bad effects. So, generally speaking, various powerful evil kammas make the suffering in hell very long and tedious, as successive bad results get their chance to mature in various ways. Bad kammic results predominate in the lower realms. One has to undergo long-term sufferings for the evils of past lives too. Consider the evils done in the present life to evaluate the nature of impending bad results. Therefore, in the Sammohavinodanī, the commentary on the Dhammasaṅganī, a note of warning is struck for this awful possibility. Some persons have to take rebirth in hell due to minor or slight misconduct. Once in hell, other grave kammas of the previous existences make their appearance too and their sufferings increases a thousand-fold. Past evil kammas are waiting for chances to manifest their influences and powers especially in the lower existences. The moral is, "don't let evil takes its chance" or "don't open the doors of evil." The present life is very important.

The Simile of the King's Favourite

For clearer understanding a simile is given here. The king's favourite, having been empowered with great authority, misuses his office for his own selfish ends. He confiscates other peoples' property, sexually abuses girls, accepts bribes, etc.,

but no one dares to complain. As the king's favourite he escapes arrest and punishment although his crimes are serious. Due to the king's influence he lives in safety for a long time. However, one day, he happens to commit a minor wrong that enrages the king, who orders his arrest and prompt punishment. As soon as the news of his arrest is known, all his past victims make their complaints to the king. The king orders investigations and inflicts severe punishments when the cases are proven. Yet more victims now come to the king to seek redress. This is an analogy for the accumulation of bad effects for an evil person when his destiny is downgraded by a minor or major fault, as the case may be.

Note that even a small misdeed can give hellish results. Once in hell, one suffers for longer as the serious results of long dormant evil kammas mature to give appropriate results at what is now the right time and place. In the eight great hells, countless millions of sufferers are tortured for aeons. Any opportunity for them to return to this human world is very remote as no good kammas can be practised there. This accumulative nature of kamma must be studied alongside the Simile of the Blind Turtle. This analogy agrees with them.

The Five Greatest Rarities

Among trillions of beings[1] who endure the results of evil kammas in the lower realms, very few are reborn again as human beings. Based on this inherent feature of Dhamma, the Buddha declares in the Aṅguttaranikāya the "Five Greatest Rarities" or the "Five Hardest Things" (*dullabha*). They are so called because of the very small chances to attain them. Human existence is one of the greatest of rarities, as human birth is very hard to attain. One must cultivate right thoughts regarding the plight of countless beings in the lower realms. In the Aṅguttaranikāya the Buddha declares: "*Manussattabhāvo dullabho* — human life is a rarity."

The bodhisatta Metteyya will achieve Buddhahood in the era of ascending human longevity after an era when the duration of human life falls to just ten years. Metteyya Buddha's dispensation will last only two or three hundred thousand years. Though this may seem like a long time, it is too short for the beings in hell to become humans and meet his dispensation. For them, this amounts to just two or three existences, so the chance of meeting him is very remote.

After Metteyya Buddha's dispensation, three succeeding aeons will be devoid of Buddhas — they will be eras of spiritual darkness. No Buddha will appear in this aeon after Metteyya.

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[1] The Hutchinson Encylopedia says: "Approximately 600 trillion (million million) krill thrive in the Southern Ocean. Together they weigh more than the entire human population." (ed.)

Those who treasure the incomparable Three Refuges and Buddha's dispensation today, have many rare opportunities to perform charitable deeds, to observe five or eight precepts, and to undertake meditation for concentration and insight. Such good persons have appreciated the great value and significance of Gotama Buddha's dispensation. Furthermore, for these devoted and wise persons at present, an encounter with Metteyya Buddha's dispensation is very probable. The reason being that they devotedly live as good human beings, as scrupulous monks, as devoted lay supporters, ardent meditators, etc. They will gain liberation, as they seek wisdom in this present dispensation with a skilful attitude and noble conduct. They may become Noble Ones in this very life. If not, they are certain to meet the coming Metteyya Buddha according to their wish. The point is that for them, basic ethical and insight attainments do not degenerate any more. No moral lapses or weaknesses will appear. Naturally, with the forces of past and present good kamma, they are bound to win liberation in this dispensation, or during Buddha Metteyya's dispensation.

While Gotama Buddha's dispensation retains its pristine purity, all human beings have rare opportunities to cultivate confidence, charity, morality, and insight meditation. If they can recognise these noble factors and fine characteristics, people possess good perfections. They appreciate the special significance and power of taking the Three Refuges, so they perform a unique meritorious deed. They now practise noble morality, concentration, and wisdom, which prevail only during the Buddha's dispensation. Their meritorious deeds will bring them at least to the six celestial realms. At best they will attain Stream-winning and higher stages in this life or the next. As they fully appreciate the significance of the Three Refuges, when noble deities in celestial realms teach the Dhamma, they will instantly become Noble Ones. Because the noble deities in the six higher realms live for innumerable years, the Buddha's dispensation prevails in the celestial realms long after it is extinct in the human world. So a good ordinary person will certainly attain liberation in the celestial realms, with the four great moral efforts. For the noble deities the duration of the Buddha's dispensation on earth is just a few years, but for them the dispensation will continue for aeons.[1] Most Noble Disciples of Buddha Gotama's time have been reborn in these celestial abodes. They are true sons and daughters of the Buddha, and so can teach the true Dhamma. Non-returners dwell in the

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[1] After listening to the Sakkapañha Sutta, Sakka, the king of Tavatiṃsa gained Stream-winning. He will live for thirty-six million years as the celestial king of Tavatiṃsa. So, for him, the two thousand six hundred years of the present dispensation is equivalent to just two and half days in the life of a hundred-year-old man. (ed.)

Suddhāvāsa Brahmā realms (the Pure Abodes), so those disciples who fail to win nibbāna in this world can listen to the Noble Dhamma if they are reborn in the brahmā realms. So excellent opportunities prevail for all true Buddhists to realise nibbāna in the celestial realms.

The Bodhisatta Metteyya is now living in the Tusita celestial realm. With him are Noble Disciples of Gotama Buddha, who were reborn in this unique realm before or after the Buddha's parinibbāna. Stream-winners from ancient Sri Lanka were naturally reborn in this celestial realm too. In every celestial realm Noble Ones of this dispensation will help others by preaching the Four Noble Truths.

Devoted and wise persons get inspiration by reading the biographies of Visākhā and Anāthapiṇḍika, and greatly admire their noble good deeds. However, they learn of their noble deeds only from the study of history. They do not personally encounter these famous disciples of the Buddha. If they are reborn in celestial realms, they will personally meet these famous Noble Ones. They will then certainly become Noble Ones too, as there are countless Noble Disciples to guide them to liberation. Devoted people, due to their charity, morality, and efforts in meditation, will enjoy refined sensual pleasures in higher abodes, even if they do not become Noble Ones. Finally, after many rounds of fortunate rebirths, when Metteyya Buddha arises in this world, they will certainly win liberation. They will surely meet Metteyya Buddha due to their good kamma during this dispensation, and will certainly realise nibbāna too. It is therefore noteworthy that men and women with this knowledge during Gotama Buddha's dispensation, possess rare and unique opportunities to achieve the best things in life, both now and hereafter.

However, ordinary meritorious deeds cannot open the doors to these unique opportunities and give the rare chance of salvation, because ordinary people do meritorious deeds without insight knowledge. So lay people should not rely solely on almsgiving. Those who have taken up the yellow robes should not feel safe in the Buddha's dispensation as they are just in the preliminary stages. Most of them are ordinary persons. If novices and monks practise the fourfold purifying morality, and fully attain the seven factors of a good man, they will reach the stage of safety. As the great power of morality during this dispensation leading to nibbāna is present, this type of person will at least reach the stage of a lesser Stream-winner (*cūḷasotāpanna*). Insight is essential for nibbāna.

Because a full Stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) is completely free from moral lapses and suffering in hell, the lesser Stream-winners also escape these great evils and sufferings, although they are not full Stream-winners yet. Due to their insight into mind and matter (*nāmarūpaparicceheda ñāṇa*), and their habitual

observance of the five precepts, they are similar to Stream-winners of the highest grade. Living in these rare circumstances, with the greatest of opportunities, no one should blame others' wickedness and failures. No one should pay any attention to others' faults, or waste time blaming the evil actions of others. One must live steadfastly practising the Dhamma oneself, thinking only of one's own rare opportunities, which must be seized with strenuous moral effort.

Inevitably, in this Buddha's dispensation, some monks show moral and intellectual lapses and backsliding. They consciously or unconsciously break the Vinaya rules, both minor and major, and live heedlessly. However, a knowledgeable and mature person (a wise lay supporter) must not pass judgement or blame them. For one's greatest responsibility is to follow the path of righteousness with one-pointedness. Only by taking care of oneself can one walk on the path steadfastly. Others' evil acts and faults are not one's concern, none of one's business.

If one regards others' faults and blames them, one suffers by defiling one's own mind, and accumulates greed, anger, and delusion in the process. One becomes impure and one's confidence wavers. These subtle unwholesome deeds, will show their power when one is about to die, and will push one down to hell. One's own impurity in physical, vocal, and mental conduct can bring about hellish results at the time of death. The Pāḷi texts and commentaries consistently caution that once in hell, chances to become a human being again are very slim. A fallen person usually goes downwards, being reborn as a hungry ghost, an animal, or in hell, successively.

Since unwholesome kammas operate most effectively in the lower abodes, to be reborn as a human being, deity, or brahmā, is very difficult. The Buddha used the term *"dullabho,"* which means "hard to get the good planes of existence." So even if a being in hell attains a higher life on account of his past kamma, most fail to reach it during the duration of a Buddha's teaching. So to be united with Noble Ones in celestial realms when his good kammas bear fruit, is a very remote possibility. Human beings in this dispensation are unlikely to meet Metteyya bodhisatta in Tusita, or after he becomes Buddha, if they are satisfied with ordinary morality and almsgiving. From this standpoint their ordinary morality and charitable acts become useless or futile.

Why? They are useless in the sense of giving effects only for the attainment of celestial and human pleasures or mundane bliss, which are commonplace and temporary things. After suffering in hell, a being attains a higher existence due to past good kamma, but heavenly bliss and human happiness are not unique. Many times one has been a deity or a human being. In future too one will certainly become a powerful deity or king. Merits done during the Buddha's

dispensation should not have such low aims. For after enjoying heavenly bliss, all may become human beings again as rich men, powerful kings, etc. These kammic results are very common and are not especially desirable in this dispensation. The chief aim of the dispensation is to realise nibbāna, to actually know through insight the Four Noble Truths, that is, to become a Noble One. In other words, by means of insight one must obtain the path and its fruition, which have nibbāna as their object of cognition. Mere wishes and prayers will not do. Past vows, inclinations, and aspirations have given devotees the chance to attain this noble aim of nibbāna in a short time through the practise of mindfulness. The primary goal of the Buddha's dispensation is to realise nibbāna here and now. Speedy liberation is best, because for countless lives one has aspired to win liberation from sorrow and suffering.

This noble aim is possible to attain during this Buddha's dispensation, so nibbāna must be won by insight. This is the unique feature of the Buddha's teaching. If one aims at mundane or heavenly pleasures, one will not only miss Gotama Buddha's dispensation, but also that of Metteyya Buddha. Hence the term "useless" is attributed to ordinary merits, which only lead to worldly joys. If one fails to meet Metteyya Buddha due to these reasons, countless aeons intervene when there is no dispensation. For this reason too, the meaning of "useless" meritorious deeds should be understood.

A special class of skilful conduct exists for the attainment of the path, its fruition, and nibbāna. This is called "*Pāramī Kusala*" — wholesome perfections for the achievement of liberation, crossing over the ocean of saṃsāra. Even among perfections, two categories can be seen:

1. Stable (*niyata*).
2. Unstable (*aniyata*).

For bodhisattas, having received assurance from a Buddha, good conduct becomes natural, and certainly leads to nibbāna. In such a person, meritorious deeds are extremely powerful and do not lose their force at all. They always give their desired results or effects. During any existence, bodhisattas perform all kinds of perfections until nibbāna is attained in their final existence.

The meaning of unstable perfections or ordinary perfections, is that they lack profundity and stability, and are mostly devoid of wisdom. As they are weak in nature they are not certain to bring the desired effects. One who has done such perfections can attain nibbāna if they meet a Buddha, in which case ordinary generosity, morality, etc., can lead to nibbāna. To that extent these merits are excellent, but in the absence of a Buddha's dispensation, good deeds

done with self-view will only prolong the suffering of saṃsāra. The power of wholesome kamma diminishes and finally disappears as one wanders through countless rebirths. So those with unstable perfections, even if they meet a Buddha, do not receive the assurance to become Buddha. Their good kamma is not of the stable, powerful type. In the cycle of existences they can do very grave evils and end up in hell, so other wholesome deeds cannot give their benefits. Powerful bad kammas take precedence in lower realms. So the weak unstable good deeds are classified as "*Aniyata kusala*", which means "unstable meritorious deeds."

Those who realise the value of a human existence in this Buddha's dispensation should not consider the faults and defects of others. No attention should be paid to the affairs, shameless behaviour, ignoble conduct, or bad character of others. One must regard only one's own rare opportunities and high status in the Buddha's dispensation. Amid turmoil, one must maintain poise and serenity at all times. Abuse, condemnation, criticism, slander, and accusation, will bring unwholesome kamma for oneself.

Realising the urgency of one's own one task, must be steadfast and equanimous, ignoring the mistakes and faults of others so that one's mind remains undefiled. I will give a simile to illustrate the skilful attitude.

The Simile of the Shipwreck

A ship was wrecked, and sank. The passengers, facing great danger, started swimming to save their lives, facing death at any moment. Seeing their pitiable plight, an ocean-deity wanted to save them. However, their past good kamma was weak, so direct rescue was impossible. The best he could manage was to create a log for each of them. Each survivor must grab a log and swim ashore. The necessary condition to gain safety was observance of the five precepts. With strenuous, constant effort, they must exert themselves to reach safety. During their struggle, the swimmers might see sharks, crocodiles, whales, and swordfish, but must not pay any heed to them. They must entertain neither malevolence, fear, nor contempt for these cruel creatures. While they struggled to find safety, ogres and demons would frighten them, and try to drown them. Sea monsters would make derisive remarks at their pathetic efforts, but they must not be angry, nor pay any attention to their odd appearance. Evil thoughts should not be entertained, for one would then surely fall from the log and perish.

The above advice was given by the ocean-deity with a stern warning that his advice must be strictly obeyed. If they strictly obeyed his instructions, he assured them, they would surely arrive at a huge sandbank. This sandbank, though

helpful for some rest, was neither their destination nor a safe place to dwell for long, for waves could overwhelm it at any time. Every person must swim with the log again to each successive sandbank. Then after ten days of constant, relentless effort, another ocean-deity would appear before them, and put them on a rescue ship laden with seven kinds of treasure. On this ship, the survivors would duly arrive at a big city-port where they would, at last, dwell in safety and abundance. This was the deity's further advice.

Fearing for their lives, all obeyed the instructions of the ocean-deity. While swimming with the log, they believed implicitly in his prophecies. With unshakable faith and resolute determination to reach safety, they exerted themselves and soon reached the city. Their minds were fixed on exertion only. They all followed the five precepts religiously. Due to their perilous predicament, they were resolute and earnest to reach safety. They were equanimous and constant in their struggle, At last, they saw the ocean-deity and reached the rescue ship with seven great treasures. When they arrived safely at the port, they became wealthy.

Their goal was achieved only by observing precepts and making strenuous efforts. Observing precepts includes equanimity and detachment regarding others' misdeeds, scorn, insults, ridicule, and odd behaviour. Likewise, in full knowledge of the noble, rare and unique powers that prevail in this dispensation, everyone should adopt the attitude of the survivor of a shipwreck. Others' moral failures and misconduct must be ignored so that steadfast progress can be made every day. Everyone needs grace and serenity in daily life. So pay no attention to others' faults. Don't criticise others' misbehaviour for a moment. Strong, detached determination must be maintained at all costs in one's struggle to win the cessation of suffering.

In the above simile, the first ocean-deity is Gotama the Buddha. The second ocean-deity is Metteyya Buddha. The log is the attainment of human life. The sandbanks are a series of higher planes of existence, in human and celestial realms. The city port is nibbāna, the ultimate goal of safety. The sharks, crocodiles, whales, and swordfish are ordinary people. The ogres and demons who make derisive remarks are like shameless and immoral monks in the Buddha's dispensation. Survivors who pay attention to their misdeeds, defile their own minds. Everyone must overlook the odd behaviour and defects of others if the goal is to be attained. The other points in the story are now easy to understand.

Choose the Right Path

One must know two paths clearly with insight and choose wisely. A person needs to examine his or her own character very thoroughly. One must avoid

blaming others' shameless, immoral, or bad conduct until the end of one's life. A wise person must use this precious human life to attain liberation, morality, and restraint. Then one will achieve nibbāna in successive higher abodes, either in this dispensation or in Metteyya Buddha's. By any means, final liberation must be won during the time of Metteyya Buddha, and the mind must be set on this resolutely. One must not allow one's mind to be polluted by the misbehaviour of others.

To attain the ultimate goal under Metteyya Buddha, one must practise generosity, morality, and meditation. Then one will surely encounter his dispensation and then win liberation. No one must miss this final chance. Two fundamental virtues must be cultivated now by striving with the four right efforts to one's utmost. These two virtues are wisdom and good conduct.

What is wisdom? It means insight into impermanence *(aniccānupassanā-ñāṇa)*, unsatisfactoriness *(dukkhānupassanā-ñāṇa)*, and not-self *(anattānupassanā-ñāṇa)*.

What is good conduct? As already mentioned, for the laity it means eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth, and the attainment of the characteristics of a good man. For monks it refers to the fourfold purifying morality. Among these two basic requirements, good conduct creates the conditions to reach happy destinies, which means freedom from suffering in hell, from evil deeds and the consequent suffering in lower realms. Thus even temporary morality ensures that one will encounter the next Buddha. So the seeds of good moral conduct must be sown anew.

If one also sows the seeds of wisdom in this life, one will be sure to meet the next Buddha, and will also win liberation. However, if only the seeds of wisdom are sown without sufficient moral conduct, one will face many hardships. Evil kamma will produce suffering in the lower realms. One will be like a traveller who lacks sufficient food for a long, arduous journey, and so perishes without reaching his destination.

Another type of person tries to obtain good moral conduct to the greatest extent, but fails to gain insight. Though he or she has good conduct, it is accompanied by superficial wisdom, which does not lead to liberation. This case is like rotten seeds, which are useless even when sown in fertile ground. Good conduct enables such a person to meet Metteyya Buddha, but he or she cannot then gain enlightenment due to lack of cultivation of wisdom in past lives. Due to the power of morality he or she obtains wealth, status, and safe conduct to the presence of the Buddha. However, having only superficial wisdom, he or she fails to realise nibbāna during Metteyya's dispensation, in spite of meeting the Buddha and devotedly paying respect to him. Being satisfied with the honour of

being a lay supporter, donating an ordination hall or building a pagoda, he or she fails to become a Noble One. If such a person joins the Saṅgha, he or she remains as an ordinary monk or nun.

The Simile of the Birds

I will give another simile to illustrate the above points. Good conduct is like a bird's wings and legs, while wisdom is like a bird's eyes and beak. The distance to the delicious mango grove in the huge forest is like the time between this dispensation and the next. Wild mango groves represent the fortunate realms of existence. Underneath the mango trees, cobras lie in wait to catch any birds that fall from the trees. Every bird landing on the ground becomes prey to these venomous snakes. So the ground symbolises the lower realms. Those birds having good wings, legs, eyes, and beaks land on the mango trees and eat the delicious fruits as they wish. Hence they are happy and well-fed. If a tree lacks good mangos, they fly to another tree to feed themselves, and live safely on them. These happy, well-fed birds with complete faculties living in safety, are like laity and monks who possess both wisdom and conduct.

Some birds have good wings, but defective beaks, so they cannot eat the delicious mangos. As they have two good wings like other birds, they arrive at the delicious mango grove. However, as they lack good beaks they cannot taste the delicious juice of the mangos. Yet they can still enjoy the pleasure of taking shelter on the trees and resting on the branches. They enjoy the fine scenery and serenity of these rare, beautiful mango groves, but due to their defective beaks, they cannot taste the fruit of Dhamma and understand its flavour at all.

These birds are similar to those who, in this dispensation, are satisfied with their virtuous conduct, but lack wisdom. They live without developing wisdom. So they will encounter the next Buddha, but will not taste freedom as they have no insight.

There is a third type of bird. They have good beaks, but their wings are damaged. They fail to reach the mango grove and taste the unique mango fruit, so they live in vain. Similarly, in this dispensation, some monks and laymen learn Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma, but they lack good conduct. Not knowing the taste of liberation, they resemble birds walking on the ground where rats and snakes wait for them.

As devoted laity and intelligent monks have now encountered this extremely rare dispensation, they should all be like the first type of birds. Wisdom and morality should both be cultivated. If they have well-rounded abilities, after their death they will reach the higher realms, and will encounter

the next dispensation. When they listen to the Dhamma they will be sure to attain liberation.

The moral is that in this life, having encountered the dispensation, wisdom and conduct must be cultivated with earnestness. Everyone must develop moral conduct and genuine wisdom with vigorous energy and firm confidence during the present Buddha's dispensation, as this very rare and great opportunity only exists now.

These words of admonition are for the questioners who have asked thirteen questions concerning the misconduct of monks, and the problems arising from relationships between the laity and the Saṅgha.

Here Ends the Dhamma Dīpanī